IN QUEST OF LIGHT

GOLDWIN SMITH

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IN QUEST OF LIGHT

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BY

GOLDWIN SMITH

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PREFACE

A SECULAR journal in England received, in the course of three months, nine thousand communications from people seeking for light on the religious question. The question, then, is evidently practical.

Never before has there been such a crisis in the history of belief. Never before has man, enlightened as he now is by Science, faced with a free mind the problem of his origin and destiny.

The following papers were penned with the same desire of light as those of the nine thousand. They appeared in different forms, chiefly as letters, in the New York *Sun*, to the courtesy and courage of whose editor the best thanks of the writer are due.

It seems that some of those who read them have wished to refer to them again. They are printed as they appeared, without attempt, which would have been vain, to give the series a literary form.

No theory is here propounded. The writer's aim is to help, if he can, in clearing the position, pointing to the right line of inquiry, and guarding against false lures. To this end inquiry and thought must be free. Reason must rule. It is, as Bishop Butler frankly says, "the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself." Its voice, therefore, is that of our Maker. Faith, which is an emotion, cannot supersede or contradict reason, though it may soar above sense. To know what remains to us of our traditional belief we must frankly resign that which, however cherished, the progress of science and learning has taken away. But destruction will not be found to be the object of the writer. Nor, it is to be hoped, will there be found in him any appearance of irreverence. Nothing can be farther from his heart.

G. S.

TORONTO, March 20, 1906.

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IN QUEST OF LIGHT

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I

CHURCH-GOING SCEPTICISM

ONE clergyman, it seems, denies the infallibility of the Bible, and treats the Church as an association for general improvement. A second finds in the Bible inaccuracy and worse. A third professes to believe only so much of the Bible as commends itself to his judgment. A correspondent of the New York *Sun* rebukes one of them for indiscretion in the publication of truth. At the same time he says himself that the truth may be rightly told in private conversation. For his own part he regards church-going as a "moral tonic, and a mental bath," adding that "it is often not comfortable to get up and take a sponge bath with cold water, in a cold room, but lacking better facilities you must do it if you would be decent among your friends and agreeable to yourself." The eminent clergyman might perhaps be

justified in retorting on his critic the charge of indiscreet disclosure.

How many church-goers are there to whom church-going is merely a moral and mental sponge bath, which they take without any definite belief in the doctrine, that they may be decent among their friends, and agreeable to themselves? How many are there who, dissembling in public, tell the truth in private conversation? If the number is large, the end cannot be far off, and this hollow crust of outward conformity may presently fall in with a crash all the greater for delay.

A layman has only to sit and listen to the sermon. But a clergyman has actively to profess and preach the doctrines. If he has ceased to believe them, what is he to do? I never could regard without entire aversion the notion of certain illuminists that truth was the privilege of the enlightened few while tradition was the lot of the crowd. But the most fatal part of the arrangement was that it dedicated the clergy to falsehood.

Caution and tenderness are most necessary in dealing with religious questions, seeing to how great an extent religion has formed the basis of

morality. But scepticism has now spread so far, not only among the learned, but among mechanics, that the policy of silence or dissimulation, supposing it were sound, is no longer possible. There is nothing for it now but perfectly free inquiry and frank acceptance of results. Caution and tenderness will always be in order, but they are not incompatible with sincerity.

What is the consequence of silence or dissimulation on the part of earnest and reverent inquirers? It is the abandonment of free inquiry to reckless and profane hands, with such results as the "Comic Life of Christ," which I picked up in an anti-clerical bookstore at Paris. I heard Mr. Ingersoll lecture on Genesis. He was very brilliant, and highly effective, but he destroyed reverence as well as superstition.

"Do not pull down, but build up," is the cry. How can we build upon a site incumbered with false tradition? All truth, negative as well as positive, is constructive; no falsehood is. I see Henry Newman preferred to his brother Francis on the ground that Henry was organic, and Francis was not. What did Henry organize? A house of mediæval dreams, in which he could

not force himself to believe without the help of such an apparatus of self-obscuration as the "Grammar of Assent." The "Grammar of Assent" can only enhance scepticism by its inevitable fall. Francis Newman, if he did nothing else, cleared the ground for construction, and he helped to lay firmly the foundation of all genuine faith, thorough-going confidence in Truth.

The three eminent clergymen, it is to be feared, are sliding down a slippery incline, on which no permanent foothold is to be found.

JANUARY, 1896.

II

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

THE theological discussion carried on in the *Sun*, apparently by practical men anxious to arrive at truth, has been in that respect more interesting than the discussions of professional theologians. One of the subjects was the validity of the evidence for a future life, which Johnson, orthodox as he was, could not help feeling to be defective. It is a question not only profoundly interesting, but intensely practical, as well in its social as in its religious bearing. Without a belief in consequences of conduct beyond the present life, moral responsibility in the full sense of the term can hardly exist. Apart from individual interest there can only be social responsibility, which would hardly control the unsocial and selfish natures, whereof there are not a few. The cultivation of character, independently of present social requirements, would lose its object, since the best of characters formed by lifelong

effort and self-denial would, equally with that formed by lifelong crime or sensuality, come to dust. Interest in the future of our race would lose its force; reason would bid each man aim simply at a comfortable passage through this life.

It is not on the old ground that the doctrine of a future life can be sustained. Theologians in former days imagined that the soul was an entity apart from our physical frame, inserted into the body by a special act of divine power, pent in it during life, and set free from it by death, though still remaining its filmy counterpart. Bishop Butler, who has said in the most effective way all that there was to be said from his point of view, argues that the soul, or as he calls it the "conscious being," is indivisible, indiscerptible, and, therefore, presumably uneffected by the dissolution of the body. But we have now learned to believe that there is nothing in us which is not the outcome of our general frame, and presumably liable, with our general frame, to dissolution at death.

Yet there is a voice within us which tells us that in the sum of things it will be well with virtue, and that the effort and self-denial expended

in the promotion of a good and beautiful character will not have been expended in vain. No man, I suppose, at the end of life, whatever his course and whatever his success had been, would not wish that his life had been righteous. If you ask me how this can be without the existence of the soul as an entity separate from the body, the body being liable to dissolution, my answer is that I cannot tell. But I do not on that account refuse to listen to a genuine prompting of my nature, if this be one, merely because it is not confirmed by the evidence of sense. Our whole being is a mystery. Try to realize in thought eternity and infinity, and you become conscious of that fact. Our sense probably tells us little more of the universe in which we are than sense tells the purblind mole, which no doubt thinks it sees all that there is to be seen. We are happily casting off superstition, but there may be still some scope for faith. Not for the faith which would reject or supplant reason, but for the faith which is the evidence of things unseen.

SEPTEMBER, 1899.

III

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

In using such a phrase as "the immortality of the soul" we put the question on a wrong footing; for the phrase seems to imply that the soul is an entity separate from our general frame, and this can no longer be maintained.

But admitting that the soul is not a separate entity, does it follow that any intimation in our nature of accountability or hope extending beyond our present life must be an illusion and ought to be disregarded? I do not wish to dogmatize or even to affirm, but simply to submit the question.

One of your correspondents holds that the question is settled by physical science, which pronounces that personal decease is final. All physical science rests upon the evidence of our bodily senses, however systematized by our reason. Have we ground for assuming that the evidence of our bodily senses is exhaustive?

We recognize the immense revelations of science

in all their bearings, and especially in their bearing on the origin and nature of man. But is there not some danger of our being swept away by a tidal wave? The doctrine of evolution has been carried to the length of imagining an evolution of Revelation.

I am not aware that science has yet explained conscious personality, or attempted to explain it, otherwise than as a collection of memories. On such collection there must surely be something to reflect and operate.

Huxley at one time confidently maintained that man was an automaton. But I believe he afterward receded from that position.

Tyndall, with whom I was so happy as to be very intimate, always avowed himself a materialist. His was the formula that matter contained the potentiality of all life. Yet he would have found it difficult to account on merely material grounds for some of his own sentiments and aspirations.

If all ends here, considering what an amount of unmerited and uncompensated misery and suffering there has been and still is, it would be difficult to confute Schopenhauer, who tells us that this is the worst, not of all conceivable, but

of all possible, worlds. It would be difficult also to show that the individual has any inducement to exert himself for the general and future good of mankind, or that there is anything to restrain him from doing whatever may tend to his own profit or enjoyment without regard to the interests of humanity, provided he can keep clear of the law. Moral responsibility in the true sense of the term, as I said before, would apparently cease. Belief in an all-powerful, all-wise, and benevolent ruler of the universe, it would seem, could no longer be maintained.

September, 1899.

IV

HAECKEL

It is not wonderful that the masterly account of Haeckel's philosophy given by a well-known writer in the *Sun* should have been read with interest and set other pens at work. It may confirm belief in Haeckel's creed, perhaps make some converts to it. Physical science has been achieving dazzling victories while theology and philosophy are for the time at a discount. Ultra-physicism is the ruling influence of the hour.

We heartily and gratefully accept the revelations of physical science, casting away all traditions, cosmogonical, anthropological, or of any other kind, which its discoveries have disproved. But before we resign ourselves to its exclusive dominion we may take time at least to look round. One or two grounds for hesitation may be mentioned. It is not pretended here to do more. The knowledge of the universe, or of the particle of it which we inhabit, is that received through

our bodily senses. Is it certain that these are our only trustworthy sources of knowledge? If our moral perceptions are natural, ought they to be put out of court? In approaching these questions we cannot help being filled with a sense of our immense ignorance and of the possibilities beyond our physical ken. This universe, as we call it, which physical science observes, including the remotest telescopic stars, is but an atom in infinity. It is less than an atom; for an atom bears some proportion to the mass, while our universe can bear no proportion to infinity. What physical science calls laws and bids us venerate as supreme, however they may bound and control our lives, are not laws, but only phenomenal uniformities, unless there is a Lawgiver; and if there is a Lawgiver, who can say that his action generally or in relation to us does not transcend his physical laws? No one can be more strictly scientific than Mr. Herbert Spencer; yet he recognizes the Unknown as an object of reverence, and it is not through any physical organ that he can perceive the existence of the Unknown.

The freedom of the human will in any degree and however qualified by the influence of character

and circumstance, would seem fatal to the materialist hypothesis as establishing the existence of a force independent of physical causation. It is, accordingly, altogether and peremptorily denied. The powers of physical causation we can inspect; we can see that there is nothing between the impact and the shock, between the composition of the ingredients and the compound. The process of moral causation we cannot inspect. Between the ascertainable determinants and the result there is room for another factor. The only appeal is to our consciousness; and our consciousness tells us plainly that we are free. Responsibility would otherwise be an illusion. If we are really automata, how came we to fancy ourselves free?

Against the belief in the immortality of the soul it is said that eternity transcends thought, and that the attempt to conceive it and identify our conscious existence with it only produces mental pain. This is true; but it is a merely psychological difficulty. Let us discard the word "immortality," which connotes eternity, and ask only whether we are sure that all ends here. If all does end here, what a scene is human history!

What a scene is human life! What can the Power be under whose dominion we are? Huxley wished, if nothing better was to come, that the globe might be shattered by a comet. Can we readily believe that when a man comes to die it makes no difference to him whether his life has been that of a benefactor of his kind or of a devil?

Evolution is an immense discovery, the most momentous probably ever made, though perhaps it has hardly yet settled down into its final form and limits. Yet may it not weigh on us too much? That we have been evolved from anthropoid apes is the conclusion of science, and we accept it, as once we believed that man had been made out of the dust of the earth, it might be radium. Still, we are what we are, not apes, but men.

Evolution itself seems to preclude finality. Where physical selection ends, moral selection may begin. Perfection and beauty of character, which, we seem to feel, have a value apart from their mere social usefulness, may also have ends unseen.

These remarks, however, are merely a plea for circumspection and against giving up ourselves blindly to ultra-physicism while we fly from

tradition and superstition. Such caution is specially to be desired, as ultra-physicism is evidently beginning to affect morality, particularly in relation to the duty of strong nations and races towards the weak.

April, 1901.

V

BETWEEN TWO FIRES

I FIND myself between two fires: the Darwinian and the Dominican. But I fancy that my position is that of a good many thoughtful men who have renounced superstition but are not ready to go the whole length of materialism without further light. Even on social grounds the prospect of a reign of commercialism without conscience is enough to make us pause.

I have not asserted that the phenomena of moral responsibility are incapable of physical explanation. I have only said that they exist, and that it is incumbent upon the materialist to explain them. They are not explained by mere reiteration, however vehement and positive, of the necessarian hypothesis.

We are ready to accept heartily and gratefully, if not always joyfully, whatever is proved by physical science. It may be that the evidence

of our consciousness is an illusion. Prove this, and we will accept the fact.

Tyndall maintained that in matter was the potentiality of all life. Of the existence, however, of something beyond physical life his own character and aspirations always seemed to me to be a very striking indication.

To turn to my critics from the other side. I do not entertain, and therefore I cannot have shown, any bad feeling toward Roman Catholics, among whom I have numbered some of my most valued friends. I have admitted that truth may conceivably be found with those whose faith is based on Church authority and miracle. But it would be absurd to number among rationalists any who believe in infallibility, ecclesiastical miracles, and transubstantiation. If I were pressed on the subject of the evidence for miracles, I would direct the attention of "Catholic Student" to the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, which takes place annually almost under the eyes of the Pope.

It could not be supposed that I intended to accuse Cardinal Newman of unveracity or deceit. His conduct as a convert to Catholicism at heart,

carrying on his movement in a Protestant church, was perhaps not always perfectly ingenuous. But all that I meant was that his aim as a speculative theologian was rather religious system than truth. He used his powers of persuasion to bend your reason to that which he had made up his mind was good for your soul. In the opening of "Tracts for the Times" he lets you see that in reviving the doctrines of apostolic succession and the eucharistic real presence he was seeking to furnish a fresh ground for clerical authority when the support of the State was being withdrawn. Nobody doubts the excellence of his character or the purity of his spiritual aspirations any more than his genius as a writer. Sophistical reasoning has often been found compatible with honesty of purpose and sincerity of belief. It was so in the case of Cardinal Newman.

April, 1901.

VI

A NEW THEORY OF IMMORTALITY

THE last attempt to make evolution, like the fabled spear of Achilles, cure the wounds which it has made in our religious faith is Dr. S. D. McConnell's remarkable essay on "The Evolution of Immortality."

The faith in which most men now over middle age grew up, and which churches still preach, is that man is distinguished from all other animals by the possession of a soul separate from his body and generally antagonistic to the body and its lusts; that at death the souls of all men alike are parted from their bodies, but will be united to them at the Day of Judgment, when there will be a final division of the wicked from the good, the good going to everlasting bliss, the wicked to everlasting woe. To this rationalism now objects at once on scientific and on moral grounds. On scientific grounds, it denies that man is essentially distinguished from the higher races

of animals; affirming that the soul, instead of being separate from the body and introduced into it by a special act of the Creator, is the outcome of our general frame. On moral grounds it objects to the utter disproportion of infinite rewards and penalties to finite merits or demerits, and to the assumption of a sharp distinction between the good and the wicked characters passing by infinite gradations into each other.

The result is a growing tendency to disregard anything beyond the present life, or at least to agree with Horace Greeley in thinking that "those who discharge promptly and faithfully all their duties to those who still live in the flesh, can have but little time left for prying into the life beyond the grave; and that it is better to deal with each in its proper order." On the other hand, though in the whirl of business or pleasure we may be willing, like Macbeth, to "jump the world to come," in the hour of reflection we cannot help shrinking from annihilation. To the Greek poet it was a sad thought that while the lowliest herb might have a second spring, man, the mighty and the wise, must sleep forever in his cold, dark grave. The strain might have been more melan-

choly still if the poet had thought not only of the extinction of the individual, but of the severance of affection. The sight and the retrospect of human pain and misery, if there is to be no compensation, are heartrending. They are a heavy set-off against release from the fear of eternal fire, the belief in which has probably always been faint, since, had it been vivid, society would have been dissolved with terror. Immortality, in the strict sense of the term, as it connotes eternity, is, like eternity and infinity, inconceivable. But the social effect of a belief in a future state has most likely been greater than is by Dr. McConnell, or generally, believed. It has in some degree balanced the absorbing pursuit of wealth. It has in some degree taken the sting from social injustice, and reconciled the masses to the unequal distribution of this world's goods. If it has not made men in general prefer the next world to the present, it has helped to prevent them from seeking their advancement in the present world by cutting throats or purses. So at least thought Voltaire, whose evidence on this point may be deemed impartial. In fact, the authority of conscience depends on the belief that whatever may happen to us in the

present dispensation, in the sum of things it will certainly be well for him who has done good, and ill for him who has done evil. Lay aside that belief, and conscience will apparently lose its authority; there will be no moral influence but that of enlarged expediency, with its social embodiments in custom or the law. Of the social consequences of this change, we seem, as has already been said, to be having some premonitory symptoms.

Dr. McConnell takes the bull by the horns. True it is, he says, that the common view of immortality is totally untenable; true it is that, as science tells us, the soul is not an entity separate from the body and enclosed in it by a special fiat of the Almighty, but simply the outcome of our general frame; true it is that man as a race is not essentially distinguished from other animals, which show in a rudimentary form mental faculties and perhaps sentiment identical with those of man. But the Doctor's theory is that the common herd of men are not capable of immortality. The common herd of men have no right or claim to it. As animals they have had their life, and this is their whole due. Those only are capable of

immortality who by a process of evolution have risen to a higher kind of life, not racial, but individual and spiritual, which qualifies them for the transition. In the Doctor's newly minted phraseology, man is not "immortal," but only "immortable"; that is, capable of immortality. The distinguished few will mount from the present state of being to another, not reunited to their terrestrial bodies, but, as dwellings of some kind souls must have, invested with bodies of that luminiferous or interstellar ether, the existence of which Newton divined and recent science has established. The common herd will mingle with the sod, as beseems their meagre speech, their shallow lives, their brutality and mischievousness, their low desires and ideals of life, and their blank insensibility to any moral appeal. Calvin could hardly exceed the ruthlessness of the demarcation. What sets on foot the evolution of the chosen few Dr. McConnell has not clearly explained to us; nor can his theory be said to be entirely free from the arbitrariness of the common belief in regard to the distribution of final bliss and woe, though it has the advantage of not consigning the rejected to everlasting fire. He admits that he is puzzled

by the case of those who are not adults. He must be equally puzzled by the case of those who die in an early and imperfect stage of their evolution.

Dr. McConnell has the satisfaction of thinking that his theory is in perfect harmony with Christianity, and even that the true meaning of the teaching of Christ and his Apostles on the subject of a future state is now for the first time made to appear. Marvellous, he says, is the agreement between his views and the words of Jesus. The words of Jesus and those of St. Paul and other apostolic writers on this subject especially are so little precise, they are so much more homiletic than dogmatic, that very different meanings may without much difficulty be read into them. But in this case, as with regard to the theory of an evolutionary Revelation, it must surely strike us as strange that, Revelation having been given for the enlightenment and salvation of mankind, the real key to it should have been withheld from so many generations of men and brought to light at last by the voyage of the *Beagle*.

Dr. McConnell, as well as the believer in the common doctrine, is confronted by the fact that,

no one having ever appeared or been heard from after death, his theory lacks the one perfectly satisfactory verification. In meeting this objection he dallies a little with telepathy, evidently feeling, however, that he is here upon slippery ground. More decidedly, though not with an assurance entirely orthodox, he professes his belief in the resurrection of Christ. The evidence of that event has been thoroughly sifted by criticism, and the conclusion to which free inquiries have come is sufficiently well known. But it is certain that if Jesus appeared after death to his disciples, it was not in a body of illuminated and interstellar ether, but in the body which had been laid in the grave. So all the Gospels tell us and all the Churches have believed.

Without any special reference to the work of Dr. McConnell, it may be said that evolution is in danger, like other great discoveries, of becoming a craze. For every problem, physical, moral, or theological, it is now made to furnish a solution. The theory is physical, and its illustrious author neither presumed to extend it to anything not physical nor denied the possible existence in the universe or in man of things

beyond the cognizance of our bodily senses. The very fact that our thoughts and aspirations range beyond earth and our present state, is a phenomenon challenging observation apart from the truth or falsehood of our ideas. Apes, beavers, ants, and bees undoubtedly do things which are curiously like the actions of men, and seem to bespeak an intelligence identical with ours; but we have no reason for believing that they look before and after, that they pine for what is not, or that they try to peer behind the veil.

JULY, 1901.

VII

THE BEE *VERSUS* MAN

"THE Life of the Bee," by Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by Alfred Sutro, is a very beautiful book, though, in its dealing with a scientific subject, somewhat poetical, and occasionally bordering on rhapsody. The writer throughout manifestly glances from the bee to man, and seeks in the name of the bee to dispute man's exclusive claim to reason, forecast, and self-sacrifice in pursuit of an ideal, with whatever of still higher moment may hang thereby. That this is the main purport of the book it would perhaps be unsafe to say. One aspect of the book it certainly is, and it furnishes a distinct point for consideration.

We are perhaps paying the penalty of having so long assumed that man was a being in his origin and nature distinct from all other creatures; that his reason was a prerogative entirely above their instinct; and that while they were nothing

but perishable clay, he had a soul separate from his body, destined to survive the body and to be reunited with its Maker. Evolution has overturned this belief. It has told us that the material origin of man and beast, probably of the vegetable world also, is the same. It has told us that there is no generic distinction between instinct and reason, instinct being reason in a rudimentary stage. It has told us that what we took for a distinct entity and called the soul is in reality a development. We now seem inclined to pass to the opposite extreme, and at once to assume that where there is no corporeal distinction, there can be no essential difference, and that if the soul is not a separate entity, spiritual life must be a dream.

The embryo of a man and that of a dog, science tells us, are alike. From this scientific fact either of two inferences may apparently be drawn. It may be concluded either that there is no essential difference between the man and the dog, or that the structure of the embryo is not decisive. If we were to go back to the nebula, whatever slight difference there might be would totally disappear. Let the origin and process of develop-

ment in the two cases have been what they may, we still are what we are. There can surely be no such thing as essential difference if it does not exist between a man and a dog.

The habits of bees, as described by M. Maeterlinck, are marvellous in the highest degree; and not less marvellous are the scientific industry and acumen by which they have been explored. They are more wonderful, perhaps, than those of ants, beavers, or apes. Yet I fail to see in them anything which puts the bee at all on a level with civilized man. They all seem to me to be such as, without discursive intelligence or deliberate effort, the drilling of environment and circumstance, prolonged through æons, may conceivably have produced. Æons must certainly be assumed for the purpose of evolution, if evolution is the creation of species by the improvement, through environment and circumstance, of accidental variations. We can hardly recognize as spontaneous effort for improvement the action of a bee in availing itself of a piece of ready-made wax which had been put in its way. Of course we cannot credit the insects with anything that has been done for them by man; with

anything at least beyond the acceptance of new conditions. A general estimate of what has been done for the hive by man would make our view of the subject more complete.

The actions and productions characteristic of man, his political and social experiments, his scientific investigations, his mathematics, his literature, his poetry, his art, cannot be ascribed to mere drilling by environment and circumstance; they are the work of conscious effort and discursive intelligence.

The "spirit of the hive" is a term habitually employed by M. Maeterlinck. But can it be said to be warranted? Routine necessary to subsistence, though unvarying, can hardly be called "spirit" or compared with a consciousness of duty to the nation and humanity such as exists, however imperfectly or fitfully, in communities of civilized men and rising to its highest level in the great benefactors of the race. "The god of the bees is the future." Making due allowance for the metaphor, we cannot help asking on what this assumption rests. What idea of the future or of anything but the interests and operations of their own time and hive can the

insects be said ever to have displayed? We are asked if we have often "encountered an ideal more conformable to the desires of the universe, more widely manifest, more disinterested or sublime, or an abnegation more complete and heroic." But the question surely is whether, in the history of the bees, we have encountered an ideal at all, as we certainly have in the history of man. A general ideal of the progress and destiny of their race they can hardly have if their sympathy and coöperation are entirely confined, as M. Maeterlinck tells us, to the bees of their own hives; if between the different hives, even those of the same origin, there is no sympathy or connection whatever. Nor does it seem that there can be any pervading sense of a community of race like our sense of a common humanity, when, as M. Maeterlinck tells us, you may crush, a few steps from their dwelling, twenty or thirty bees that have all issued from the same hive, and you will find that those which are left untouched will not even turn their heads.

The vegetable world, too, has its wonders. "We are struck," says M. Maeterlinck, "by the genius that some of our humblest flowers display

in contriving that the visit of the bee shall infallibly procure them the cross-fertilization they need." He bids us see "the marvellous fashion in which the orchis Moris combines the flag of its rostellum and retinacula; observe the mathematical and automatic inclination and adhesion of its polynia; the unerring double see-saw of the anthers of the wild sage, which touch the body of the visiting insect at a particular spot in order that the insect may in its turn touch the stigma of the neighboring flower at another particular spot; and, in the case of the *Pedicularis sylvatica*, the successive calculated movements of its stigma." Do not these contrivances almost rival the bee's hexagon? Might not such phrases as guiding "spirit" and devotion to the "future" as "god" be applied to these plants as reasonably as to the bee?

That the hive bees have been developed out of lower, less gregarious, and less communistic races, seems certain; to that extent a claim of progress must be allowed. On the other hand, Egyptian monuments appear to demonstrate that there has been no material change in the structure of the comb for many thousands of years. And

now perfect monotony appears to reign; one hive is the counterpart of another. In human commonwealths meanwhile there have been immense changes; and there is now a great variety, the result of struggle more or less pronounced for the attainment of a higher state.

It is hardly safe to assume that when animals do anything conducive to the advantage of the tribe they do it with understanding. Stags fight in the rutting season. Their fighting conduces to the selection of the best sire for the herd. But can they be said to fight with that intention?

Is reason in the human sense of the term possible without language? Is sustained progress possible without writing? Bees evidently do communicate as well as coöperate with each other, but it seems to be only in the most rudimentary way and about a most limited range of subjects. They certainly do not write or in any way record their thoughts and experiences so as to store them for posterity.

Defects, such as the massacre of the males, the author admits. But a superior being, looking down upon the ways of men, would, M. Maeterlinck says, see great defects there also. He would

see idle wealth lodged in luxurious palaces, industrious poverty lodged in hovels. However, looking close, he would see that not all wealth is idle, and that its attainment was the incentive to labor. But he would see, moreover, that man was always struggling against the defects of society, that in the higher communities philanthropy was at work, that plans of reform were on foot, that dreams of social perfection were being dreamed. Is there anything analogous to this in the commonwealth of the bees? Is there the slightest reason for supposing that they take thought for the improvement and elevation of their race?

It is in the "nuptial flight" that the writer's poetry rises to its highest pitch. Exact observation of the union of the queen bee with the male chosen for the purpose of impregnation there can hardly have been, as it takes place in the sky. But accepting the description as it is given us, how can this momentary and coarse embrace, in which the entrails of the male are torn out and he perishes, bear comparison with romantic love and pure conjugal affection? It is true that romantic love and conjugal affection of the highest kind are found only in civilized man;

but in civilized man they are found, and men as a race are capable of civilization.

"Sad let it be," says M. Maeterlinck, dismissing a melancholy portion of his subject, "as all things in nature are sad when our eyes rest too closely upon them. And thus it ever shall be so long as we know not her secret, know not even whether secret truly there be. And should we discover some day that there is no secret or that the secret is monstrous, other duties will then arise that as yet perhaps have no name." There is no use in attempting to veil the fact, which is already casting its shadow over our life. Toward the belief that there is no secret or that the secret is monstrous, toward the belief, in other words, that the world is ruled by force without design, of which man and his history are a play, science and thought are at present tending. If this is the truth, we must bow, though the materialist can hardly expect us to rejoice, and make each of us the best we can of our brief lease of existence. Two things, however, may still be whispered on the other side. One is that the phenomena of what we have hitherto called man's spiritual nature, his sense of moral responsibility,

his appreciation of moral beauty, his moral aspirations, his conception of a state beyond the present, the refinement of his affections, his poetry and art, his conscious and forecasting efforts for the improvement, moral as well as material, of himself and his race, in themselves claim consideration like other phenomena submitted to science, whatever may be the physical genesis of man or the soundness of his particular conceptions. Another is that we have apparently no sufficient reason at present to conclude that there is nothing in the universe, or nothing cognizable by us, beyond that which is perceived by our bodily senses and is the subject of physical science.

There is nothing, I hope, in what has now been said at variance with thorough loyalty to scientific truth or with just appreciation of a very interesting and charming book.

August, 1901.

VIII

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

THE battle with Tammany did not suspend the discussion in the *Sun's* columns of the immortality of the soul and its relation to morality. Nothing can be more intensely practical than this question. Since the decline of religious belief, morality has been dragging its anchor, and our state of transitional perplexity may be one source at least of much of the practical disturbance of the world.

One bold thinker says that morality without immortality is a sentimental humbug. As an agnostic or an atheist, he claims the right of making his own moral law. Subjectively, no doubt, he has that right. Objectively he will find the limit of the right in the club of the nearest policeman. Whatever turn may ultimately be taken by our convictions about a hereafter, society will uphold by law or social influence rules necessary to its own security and convenience here. It may

even uphold them more rigorously than ever when it is convinced that the present life is all. The natural affections, parental, conjugal, and social, will also retain their force.

So far, however, as conscience is concerned this dauntless agnostic is logical. Immortality is an idea which my mind fails to grasp, as it fails to grasp the ideas of eternity, infinity, omnipotence, or first cause. But if this life ends all, I do not see how conscience can retain its authority. The authority of conscience, it seems to me, is religious. The sanction of its awards appears to be something beyond and above temporal interest, utility, or the dictates of society and law. In the absence of such a sanction what can there be to prevent a man from following his own inclinations, good or bad, beneficent or murderous, so long as he keeps within the pale of law or manages to escape the police? One man is a lamb by nature, another is a tiger. Why is not the tiger as well as the lamb to follow his nature so far as the law will let him or as he has power? Eccelino, for instance, was by nature a devil incarnate, a sort of Satanic enthusiast of evil. What had merely utilitarian morality to say against

his gratification of his propensities as long as he had power on his side?

The age of Machiavel was something like ours, in being one of religious eclipse attended by failure of the traditional foundation of morality. A domination of self-interest without regard for moral restrictions was the result.

I do not presume to put forward any hypothesis. I merely call attention to certain phenomena of humanity which seem at first sight to militate against the purely materialist view. Our power of choice in action, which, without belying our consciousness, cannot be denied; our consequent sense of responsibility; our moral aspirations and endeavors; our conceptions of a higher state of being and desire to press onward towards it; all the phenomena, in a word, of what has hitherto been called our spiritual nature — by what process of physical evolution can we suppose these to have been produced?

Heartily accepting evolution, I demur to the assumption that physical development is the end, as well as to the assumption that nothing of which our bodily senses are not cognizant can be true.

Perfection may be produced by the fiat of Omnipotence. This clearly is not the constitution of the universe, since the universe is full of imperfection. Physical progress may be made by evolution, which out of the worm has evolved the frame of man. But there is another mode of progress of which we are conscious in ourselves, and of which man's history, so far as it is progressive, is the outcome. This is intelligent effort. In fact, we can hardly understand any moral perfection or excellence of character except as the product of effort. A seraph is insipidity with unanatomic wings.

It constitutes for us a special interest in ancient masters of ethics, Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus, that, while they looked at human nature with eyes as clear as ours, they were without our special prepossessions. From the State polytheism they had broken away. Yet in all of them you find recognition of the character produced by moral effort and transcending mere utility. This is especially striking in Plato, who is so far from utilitarianism that he even looks on martyrdom as the natural meed of the righteous. It is less striking in

Aristotle, whose ideal is an animated Greek statue, but still it is there. In Plato there is a distinct connection of virtue with a personal though unseen power of good. In Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus the power is not personal, but there is a power.

I have assumed that as agents we have liberty of choice. I eschew the term "free will," leaving it to the metaphysical angels in Milton's Hell. The necessarian hypothesis, seeing that the chain of causation stretches back indefinitely, must imply that all our actions were irrevocably settled in the very beginning of things. Not having seen the beginning of things, I cannot say; but unless my whole moral being is a delusion, I have liberty of choice.

Frank acceptance of all proved truth, such as the general theory of evolution; caution in surrendering ourselves to the last great discovery; recognition and examination of all phenomena, not physical only, but of every kind, together form the compass to which we must look for guidance over a dark and perilous sea.

DECEMBER, 1901.

IX

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

THE correspondents of the *Sun* still keep up the philosophic debate about the nature and destiny of man. No question can be more truly practical than that which concerns the authority of conscience and the basis of morality, personal, social, and international. We are everywhere met by the effects of the present moral doubts and distractions.

One of the correspondents, apparently a thorough-going necessarian, quotes in support of his theory a passage of Oliver Wendell Holmes: —

"The more I have observed and reflected the more limited seems to me the field of action of the human will. Every act of choice involves a special relation between the ego and the conditions before it. But no man knows what forces are at work in the determination of his ego. The bias which decides his choice between two or more motives may come from some unsuspected ancestral source, of which he knows nothing at all. He is automatic in virtue of that hidden spring of reflex action, all the time

having the feeling that he is self-determining. The story of Elsie Venner illustrates the direction in which my thought was moving. The imaginary subject of the story obeyed her *will*, but her will obeyed the mysterious antenatal poisoning influence."

This passage seems to me rather literary than philosophic. However, it says only that the human will or whatever it is that constitutes our moral responsibility is "limited." Nobody supposes that our liberty of choice is unlimited or that the will operates in a vacuum. Necessarianism, I suspect, is at bottom merely a mental puzzle, which may perplex our conceptions, but does not affect our actions. No man practically applies it either to his own actions or to those of his fellows. The belief upon which we all act and by which we always judge actions is that of moral responsibility, which implies a freedom of choice, however limited. Achilles does overtake the tortoise in spite of a demonstration, apparently logical, that he will not; and though we may have a logical difficulty in rebutting absolute causation we do deliberate and decide. For my part I must say that I do not expect to see the exact relation of will to preëxisting character and

circumstance stated in a precise and scientific form. Huxley had at one time got himself entangled in the notion that man was an automaton which had become automatically conscious of its own automatism; but I believe he shook it off in the end.

Necessarianism, or a denial of the freedom of the will, appears to assume that there is only one element in action, the predisposing motive. Appeal to our consciousness seems to tell us that there are two: the antecedent motive and volition. In ordinary action the duality is not perceived; in doubtful and hesitating action it is.

Another of the correspondents seems to me, with all deference be it said, to exemplify the tendency of great discoveries, when victorious in their inevitable combat with prejudice, to pursue their victory too far. The discoverer of evolution, however, is not responsible for the present tendency to regard the nature of man as merely physical and to treat the community on that principle. Why should we not weed out the human herd as we do the herd of kine or the flock of sheep, killing off the unpromising and allowing only the more promising organizations

to live? A sufficient reason, setting aside all mere traditional reverence for humanity, is that while in the case of the kine or the sheep we can see everything that is necessary to determine our selection, we cannot see that which is most necessary to determine our selection in the intellectual and moral being, man. The correspondent, if I rightly understand him, would have "society" put to death the "socially unfit" or disable them from propagation. What is "society" but the government? and what government, even with the aid of the best experts, could see so far into the inner man as fitly to undertake the process of elimination? Where would the line between social fitness and unfitness be drawn? What would be the outward signs of unfitness? Those who are convicted of crime you might hang or subject to the alternative treatment suggested. But in the case of the unconvicted, what is your test? How can you foresee development? Socrates confessed that it was through a hard struggle that he attained virtue. An ultra-evolutionist would have eliminated him in his first stage. Nero, on the other hand, set out well.

A metaphysical book, it seems, has reached its eighth edition. This shows that a number of inquirers are still upon that track. Is there any hope in that direction? Is it possible that mental introspection should lead us to objective truth? Might we not as well look for scientific fact in the structure of a scientific instrument, as for objective truth in the structure of the mind? Intellects of the highest order have been devoted to metaphysic; and with what result? From the Greek philosophers to the schoolmen, from the schoolmen to the Germans, system succeeds to system, without progress or practical outcome. Even the reputed discoveries of Berkeley have borne no practical fruit, and Hegel is already as dead as Pythagoras. Meantime genuine science wins a series of practical triumphs and is advanced even by partial errors. The datum assumed by metaphysic throughout is that reality must correspond to conception. No such assumption is involved in our belief in moral responsibility or other spiritual phenomena of human nature, which are facts of mental experience and observation though not of bodily sense.

We have specially to be on our guard against the attempts of some writers of the metaphysical school to shake the foundation of all scientific or rational belief, by reducing everything to philosophic doubt, and thus to place us at the mercy of orthodox tradition. Dean Mansel was supposed in his Oxford sermons, by demonstrating our inability to grasp the Unconditional or comprehend divine morality, to have made scepticism slay itself with its own sword. Loud was the applause of orthodoxy. But one shrewd head of a college as he came away from the University Church, said, "I never expected to hear atheism preached from the pulpit of the university."

JANUARY, 1902.

X

EASTER

EASTER revives the discussion of the immortality of the soul, of which the Resurrection of Jesus is regarded by Christendom as the pledge, though the fact that Deity could not be holden of death would hardly in itself be a pledge that death shall not hold mere humanity.

At Easter a year or two ago I heard a preacher speak of the Resurrection of Jesus as the best attested of all historical events. So far a fond adherence to tradition could carry him! If the event really happened and is of such unspeakable importance as has been supposed, it would be reasonable, and more than reasonable, to expect not only that the evidence of it should be better than that of any other historical event, but almost that there should be a standing miracle of some sort to place it forever beyond the possibility of doubt. The fact, however, is that the narratives are anonymous; that their authorship is unknown;

that they are of uncertain date; that they are hopelessly at variance with each other. The attempts to harmonize them, such as that of Dr. Greswell, serve only to make the inconsistencies more glaring. Is it conceivable that the records of an event on which the salvation of mankind depends should be left to be cleared from doubt and confusion by the hermeneutic ingenuity of a divine in the nineteenth century?

A personal impression, however strong, however deepened by Church art as well as by theology, is no evidence. It is inconceivable that the power which ordained such an event and for such a purpose should have left its authenticity to rest upon impressions. There can be no use in fondly clinging for support to that which itself cannot stand. Still the exclamation with which the Eastern Church hails Easter morning is true. As the Founder of Christendom, Christ is risen indeed.

These questions, as has been said before, speculative as they may seem to those who deem themselves practical men, are really practical and urgent in the highest degree. The conscience which we have hitherto obeyed, or endeavored

approximately to obey, and which has more or less kept the world in order, seems in its nature religious. It has claimed, and to some extent practically asserted, an authority beyond that of any earthly tribunal. It has proclaimed that it shall be well with those who do good and ill with those who do evil, not only in this transitory life. It has bidden the righteous, suffering from injustice here, appeal to a higher tribunal, and threatened the unrighteous on whom fortune in the present world smiles with a reversal of their lot hereafter. The most comprehensive view of our temporal interest, even though it may embrace the whole compass of our social affections, is not what we mean by conscience.

Every day brings fresh proof of the fact that by the collapse of the traditional beliefs on which morality has hitherto largely rested morality itself is being shaken, so that there is a danger of a moral interregnum like that which there was between the fall of mediæval Catholicism and the rise of Protestantism, aggravated, moreover, by the struggle for gain. The rule of conduct for nations toward each other threatens to be not antiquated righteousness, but conformity to the

indications of the stars in their courses; in other words, seizure of all opportunities of aggrandizement without regard to the rights of others. One cannot help respecting the memory of the Barbary corsair, who did not talk about the stars in their courses, or about duty taking the hand of destiny, or about a providential mission, but said frankly that he wanted his neighbors' goods, and if the owner tried to keep them he would knock him on the head.

So eminent a thinker as Dr. Felix Adler regards personal immortality as a thing not to be desired, but as a thing to be dreaded. It involves, he says, endless suffering and interminable struggling toward some higher plane of existence which still always rises above you. His sentiment appears to be somewhat like that of the Buddhist, who strives by intense self-effacement to escape from the burden of conscious personality and the interminable series of transformations. But if Dr. Felix Adler recoils from the prospect of personal immortality, does not he, or do not men in general, recoil from the prospect of personal annihilation? Apart from our individual destiny, is it not sad to think of all the uncompensated

suffering which, on the hypothesis that existence ends here, fills the pages of human history? Does death level not only the king with the beggar, but the best of men and the greatest benefactor of his kind with the worst of tyrants or assassins? If it does, can we believe in the moral government of the world? If we cannot believe in the moral government of the world, where is the sanction of morality?

Nor, again, can we contemplate without sorrow the prospect of final separation from those we love?

Immortality, as has been said before, like infinity or eternity, transcends our power of conception. The attempt to realize it only produces a sort of dizziness in the mind. It seems better to set that term aside, and simply to consider whether it is certain or probable that all ends for us with death. There are phenomena in our nature which, apparently, are not physical, but seem to point to something beyond our physical existence. They constitute in the aggregate what we have called our spiritual life, including our sense of moral responsibility, our moral aspirations, our feeling for moral beauty, our power of

idealization, our higher and more perfect human affections. Is there anything to which these point? May there not still be something behind the veil?

Clinging to tradition, however entwined the tradition may be with all our associations, is, in the face of the revelations of science and criticism, no longer possible. We are in danger of falling from that state into a blind and even fanatical materialism, which, if we could see behind the veil, might be found to be no more identical than tradition itself with the progressive purpose of the universe.

April, 1902.

XI

EASTER

No one whose life has not been devoted to the study can pretend to have read everything that has been written on either side about the authorship, dates, and historical character of the Gospels. But I have read enough on both sides to convince me that the authorship and dates are doubtful; that the Gospels contain much unhistoric matter; and that they are often and seriously at variance with each other. The variations are especially marked and irreconcilable in the narratives of the Resurrection. Moreover, these narratives are connected with such prodigies as the miraculous darkness, the rending of the veil of the Temple, and the apparitions of the dead in the streets of Jerusalem, which could not have occurred without making a tremendous impression or without leaving their trace in history. It may be true, as one of your correspondents says, that we cannot set limits to the action of Providence. But

we are surely justified in assuming that Providence would not, in communicating vital truths to men, contravene its own purpose by simulating the defects of human evidence.

Besides, we have to meet the general objection to the whole supernatural system of which the Resurrection is an integral part. Science has indisputably proved that instead of being created perfect and falling from perfection, man rose by evolution from a lower organization to a higher; and if there was no Fall, how can there be room for the belief in the Incarnation and the Redemption?

It is a subject on which it may be painful to piety to dwell, but is it possible to follow in imagination the details of the Incarnation, with the relations of the two natures to each other, both here on earth and after the Ascension, without feeling the impossibility of conception, and therefore of belief? Newman desired his disciples specially to mark that it was Almighty God that endured the scourging; and Frederick Faber, one of Newman's circle, described the babe as sleeping in the mother's arms, when she had slaked its thirst and stilled its cry, yet with its

sleeping eye seeing the universe, and all that was therein. We may repeat, but we cannot realize the creeds. Probably their theosophic authors did not, though their cosmogony was much narrower than ours.

The sublimities of the Mosaic story of creation, in spite of some strongly anthropomorphic passages, have wonderfully prolonged its hold. But its mythical character can no longer be denied by any one whose mind is open to scientific truth. In fact, of the orthodox clergy, not a few are ready to embrace the expedient of allegorical interpretation, which, it is needless to say, amounts to surrender of the case.

This is said in no spirit of general scepticism or destructiveness, but very much the reverse. It surely is worse than vain to cling to dead beliefs. Our only hope of salvation lies in the full and hearty, though reverent and discriminating, acceptance of that which is now the revealed truth, though reason is the organ of the revelation. In trying to save the creeds we may make jettison of spiritual life.

It is said truly that the revision of antiquated creeds, such as the Westminster Confession, is a

desperate undertaking. Those who attempt it are trying to revise the sixteenth century. Surely the wiser course would be to let the old creeds remain as they are, for whatever they may still be worth; but to cease to impose them, or any human manifesto, as ordination tests. Let the engagement at ordination be one simply binding the minister to preach what in his conscience he believes to be the truth. An enlightened laity asks for no better credentials on the part of its teacher.

The *Sun* speaks of the remarkable spread of ritualism, even in churches which are not sacerdotal and do not pretend to apostolical succession. Ritualism has had two epochs and two phases. In England, when the advance of liberalism after the passing of the Reform act threatened to withdraw from the clergy the support of the State, they looked about for another support, and thought that they found it in a revival of the doctrines of Apostolical Succession and Real Presence. This is very distinctly avowed by Newman in the opening of the "Tracts for the Times." That movement, however, was ecclesiastical and theological; the æsthetic element, though distinctly

present, was not predominant; on Newman himself and his companions of the Oratory it had comparatively little hold. The present movement, which pervades not only the Anglican and mediævalizing Church, but the churches generally, owes its existence, not to theological speculation or to ecclesiastical policy, but to the growth of a vacuum in the region of religious belief, which music, art, flowers, and ceremony are required to fill. That the beliefs and the religious system of the Middle Ages can be restored is an idea with which Ritualists, those of the Anglican Church at least, may play for a time, but it can hardly be seriously entertained. It is too likely that when the æsthetic enchantment has lost its power blank materialism will be the end.

April, 1902.

XII

IS RELIGION WORTHLESS?

"VERUS" has said that no religion ever taught us anything worth knowing. What he said was true, if by "worth knowing" he means beneficial in a material sense. Yet it cannot be denied that religion has practically played a most important part in the development of humanity. Religious ordinance was the form originally assumed by social morality. A memorable instance of this is the religious legislation ascribed to Moses, especially the Decalogue. But the moral and social philosophy of Socrates and his disciples Plato and Xenophon certainly rested on religious belief; not in the Greek pantheon, but in a supreme power that made for righteousness. So did the moral philosophy of the great stoics Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, impersonal as their deity is.

Egyptian morality appears to have been in form religious. More questionable, of course,

is the influence of the Greek pantheon, with its amorous Zeus and its sensual Olympus. Yet the Greek gods were upholders of justice. The Delphic Oracle in its best day seems to have been an organ of morality. We have the story of a man who, wishing to repudiate a deposit, consulted the Oracle and received an encouraging reply. When, having paid the penalty of his crime, he reproached the Oracle with having misled him, he was told that this was his reward for the insult which he had offered to the moral majesty of the god.

In the æsthetic development of man religion has unquestionably played a great part. The Parthenon and the cathedrals, the great painters, the composers of sacred music, are religious. So are Dante and Milton. So fundamentally is Shakespeare, though he was probably a free thinker.

There have been aberrations very many and horrible, such as Moloch-worship and the Inquisition. But religion is not to be charged with the crimes of worldly powers which have enslaved it and abused its name.

Christendom, whatever may become of its claims as a Revelation, retains its claims as a

historical fact and an element in the progress of moral civilization.

What is the origin of religion? The tendency appears to be almost universal, showing itself independently in every member of the human race, saving perhaps the very lowest savages. There must be some rational account of it, and it is difficult to see how that account could be found in evolution or in anything disclosed by physical science. Such an explanation of the origin of religion as the apparition of dead chieftains in dreams seems to be totally inadequate. Let us be thoroughly loyal to science and embrace all its real discoveries, however subversive of our traditions. But let us ask for recognition of all the phenomena of human nature, not only those which are demonstrably physical, but also those which appear to belong to another class.

May not a man be doing what is at present premature in absolutely rejecting all religious belief and cutting himself off from the religious life of the world? May not the impetus of our parting from belief in the supernatural and the dogmatic carry us at first too far?

August, 1903.

XIII

THE CRIMES OF CHRISTENDOM

COMMENTING on an arraignment of the Christian churches, the *Sun* said the other day: —

> If our correspondent will follow the history of Christianity in Europe from the time it first gathered strength to assert itself with physical force he will read a record of war, persecution, atrocity and fierce human passions inflamed by religious enthusiasm which is not exceeded if it is equalled in its darkness in the history of any previous religious propaganda of which we have the record.

Of the crimes committed in the name of Christianity it is impossible to speak with too much sorrow and abhorrence. But the guilt, I submit, attaches not to Christianity itself, but to malignant influences under which it has fallen. The vital doctrines of Christianity as preached by its Founder are the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Our faith in these doctrines may be failing; our faith in the brotherhood of man would certainly appear to be undergoing eclipse. But there is nothing in them which

could possibly lend itself to atrocity or persecution. When the Inquisitor sought a warrant in the Gospel for his religious murders, he could find nothing more to his purpose than the words in the parable of the Great Feast, "Compel them [the guests] to come in," or St. Paul's saying, "I would that they were cut off which trouble you," which only the blindest bigotry could construe as a longing for an auto-da-fé.

Islam propagated itself by the sword. Christianity in its native character propagated itself by the Word preached by peaceful missionaries, who, taking their lives in their hands, converted the barbarians and founded the Christian nations.

The Founder of Christianity said that His Kingdom was not of this world. Had that saying been kept, there could have been no persecutions. By keeping it in after days the Baptist Church has won a distinction unhappily almost unique. When the Empire, after struggling long to extinguish Christianity, bowed to it and made it the imperial religion, it extended its political despotism over the Church. Orthodoxy, the doctrine patronized by the court, became law, heresy was treason; and there followed the

inevitable results. Ecclesiastics denied their founder by appealing to the secular arm. Christianity, however, humanized the Roman law, notably with regard to slavery.

Special influence and authority could not fail to attach to the bishops of the two imperial cities, Rome and Constantinople; especially to the Bishop of Rome, who was not overshadowed by the presence of the Emperor. In the dissolution of the Empire, the Roman See became a rallying point for the Western Church. But there was really no Pope in the present sense of the term, no spiritual dictator claiming theocratic and universal authority over the Church, before Hildebrand. Gregory the Great denounced the title of universal Bishop as blasphemous. Hildebrand it was who created the theocratic despotism, using such instruments as Norman conquest and German rebellion, as well as a clerical militia detached from humanity and bound to the Papacy by the enforcement of celibacy. There is not in history a greater mockery than the pretence of this autocrat and his successors, including Innocent III., Alexander VI., and Julius II., to represent the preacher of the Sermon on the

Mount. Here we have the main source of persecution and its atrocities; hence flowed the extermination of the Albigenses, the Inquisition, Alva's reign of blood in the Netherlands, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the Dragonades. The Crusades, with any atrocities which they may have involved, were more the work of Christendom at large, but they can hardly be set down as persecution; they were rather a war for the defence of Christian civilization against the on-rolling tide of Mohammedan conquest, that irruption of moral barbarism, as it is now seen to be. Genuine Christianity was not left without witnesses. It showed itself in such characters as that of Anselm, in such writings as the "Imitatio Christi."

Protestant Christianity could not at once get clear of the mediæval tradition. But presently it did. It has repented of its crimes and renounced persecution. The Syllabus, which is the latest manifesto of the theocratic Papacy, reaffirms the principle of intolerance, throwing down the gauntlet to modern civilization and to the liberty of opinion which has been won by the struggle of ages for humanity. Infallibility cannot repent.

The religious character would in any case, no doubt, have shown its weak side. There would have been extravagance, bigotry, controversial heat, and rancor; perhaps fanatical and sectarian affray; but without the influence of the Empire and the Theocracy there could hardly have been these enormous crimes.

Catholicism, as its name imports, is universal. Papalism is Italian. Only Italians, native or naturalized, can be Popes. The few historical exceptions are exceptions which prove the rule. Catholicism, with all its characteristics and graces, was fully developed before Hildebrand. There is nothing polemically Papal in the writings of Anselm, Thomas à Kempis, or Pascal. Lacordaire and Montalembert were thoroughly Catholic, but as friends of liberty, thinking that it could be reconciled with Catholicism, they were disavowed by the Papacy. By Acton, who died Catholic, the Papacy is sternly arraigned.

I plead once more for fair consideration of all real phenomena, physical or moral. Christianity, apart from its entanglements with imperial despotisms and theocratic usurpation, seems, by the

principles which it has propagated and the characters which it has produced, to have been up to the present time a great power, to say the least, of moral progress, and one which is not easily explained by physical evolution.

October, 1902.

XIV

DOES CHRISTIANITY FALL WITH DOGMA?

It seems to be assumed in some quarters that if ecclesiastical dogma departs, nothing of Christianity will be left us. The edifice of ecclesiastical dogma is built on belief in the Incarnation and Atonement, which again depends on belief in the Fall of Man. Science has apparently disproved the Fall of Man, and proved that man, instead of falling, rose, by evolution, from lower organizations. The inference seems irresistible and fatal to dogmatic Christianity. But does this reduce Christianity to an ethical speculation, one of a number of the same kind?

The essence of Christianity as it came from the lips of the Author seems to be belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Trace the practical effect of this belief through the centuries, disengaging it as well as you can from ecclesiastical superfetations, from the effects of fellowship with evil powers of the world, from

the crimes of theocracy, and from the fanaticism of sects. Does it not appear wherever it has prevailed, under whatever form and in whatever circumstances, in all nations and in all states of life, to have produced in those who strove to live up to its excellence and beneficence of character, spiritual happiness, with an inward assurance that it would be well for them in the end? In that case may not Christianity fairly present itself as something more than an ethical speculation? May it not claim to rank in some degree as a right solution of the problem of humanity and a practical experiment which has not failed?

It is said that in the struggle of righteousness and mercy against might, those who have borne themselves best upon the side of that which Christians claim as Christian principle, have in many cases not been Christians. This is true, as it is true also that some Christian churches have taken that which seems to be ethically the anti-Christian side. But have these men, in discarding Christian profession, discarded belief in that which is the essence of Christianity? Have they renounced belief in the brotherhood of man? May it not be said that Comte's Great Being of

Humanity is Christ's brotherhood of man under another name? Belief in God may have been renounced, yet to warrant belief in a brotherhood of man there must surely be some paternal and consecrating power.

To demonstrate that Christianity cannot stand as a philosophy of the conduct of life without the support of dogma, are cited extreme passages in the Gospel against carefulness for riches and the things of this world, with the remark that "so far from there being practical unanimity in accepting this philosophy of the conduct of life, there is practically unanimity in repudiating it." Beyond doubt the passages are in expression hyperbolical. They are the language, as those who have rejected supernaturalism believe, of a carpenter's son who spoke to the heart rather than to the philosophic mind, who had been bred in no school of philosophy and was untrained to the strict use of language. Beyond doubt their hyperbolical form has told against their practical effect. But, after all, the gist of them is "keep your heart above wealth and devotion to its increase." Has not this been practised, without detriment to industry, by men even in the

mart or on the Stock Exchange, and have they not found that self-approval and moral happiness were the result?

It was rather surprising to hear a doubt expressed, as it was the other day, by a scientific man as to the effect of the progress of science on human happiness. As to the effect of scientific discovery on our material well-being and everything that directly depends on it there can be no doubt whatever, though querulous old age may sometimes be found looking back wistfully to the restfulness of the days before the electric telegraph, the ocean greyhound, and the automobile. Nor, if it is the effect of scientific discovery on our religious faith that is meant, can there be any doubt that knowledge of our nature and destiny, however unwelcome and lowering in itself, is better than ignorance and infinitely better than falsehood. Let science prove that man is merely a physical development of the ape or earthworm, and that with his present life all ends; we will accept the proof, though there may be little comfort in the materialist's exhortation to make the best of this life and look forward with complacency to our eternal sleep,

the life perhaps being that of a galley-slave, while eternal sleep is a pleasant name for annihilation. But the conviction cannot be said to enhance the dignity or conduce to the happiness of man; apparently it will hardly conduce to morality, personal or social. Before accepting it we once more crave a full examination of all real phenomena. Physical science itself is still advancing, and there may be Darwins after Darwin.

January, 1904.

XV

SABATIER ON RELIGIONS OF AUTHORITY

MOMENTOUS is this crisis in the history of man if all authoritative religion, all consecrated tradition, fails him, and he is left to work out by his own reason the problem of his origin, state, and destiny. With the religions of authority would pass away the whole order of spiritual guides, leaving, as the departure of the clergy certainly would, an incalculable void, not only in our theological, but in our moral and social system. To such a crisis, however, according to M. Sabatier's work on "Religions of Authority," we have come.

The days of all the religions of authority, in M. Sabatier's opinion, are numbered. He appears to think that the Papacy is likely to last the longest. It has a wonderfully strong organization, an imposing and fascinating ritual, a legendary antiquity founded on a mythical list of early Popes. It still commands the allegiance

of masses like the Italian peasantry, who can believe in the miracle of St. Januarius and the Holy House of Loretto, or the crowds of pilgrims to Lourdes. Of highly educated adherents it retains comparatively few, of scientific adherents almost none. It offers in these times of religious confusion and perplexity a tempting haven to the weak and doubting mind. It has in its own despite gained in spiritual character and respectability by severance from the temporal power. As an anti-revolutionary influence it is rather regarded with complacency by the conservative statesmen of Europe. Guizot seemed to have this feeling about it. But now, loaded with its burden of historical memories, it is going into its last struggle against reason and progress. In its Syllabus it bids defiance to liberty of conscience and of opinion, to the right of the State, to the cardinal principles of modern civilization. Civilization takes up the glove.

That the Papacy is not the whole of the Catholic Church we have a reminder in another religion of authority, with which M. Sabatier does not deal. The Eastern Church, now mainly represented by the State Church of Russia, has all along

remained separate from that which is represented by the Papacy, in spite of an enforced, transitory, and nugatory act of submission. In this case the authority is largely national, the union of Church and State in Russia being complete, so that the Procurator of the Holy Synod is a very important Minister of State. The Church is Holy Russia, and Holy Russia is the Church. The immobility of the system verges on torpor. Naturally those who break away from it break away with a vengeance. The orthodoxy of Pobyedonostseff gives birth to heterodoxy in Tolstoi. Here also the incipient forces of dissolution may be seen.

Yet another religion of authority unnoticed by M. Sabatier is Anglicanism, the religion of the State Church of England. A State Church that of England is, in the fullest sense of the term. Its doctrines and ritual are an amalgam of the personal bias of Henry VIII., who died half a Catholic though in revolt against the Papacy, with the policy of his executors, a new aristocracy looking for support to the party of progress against the ancient nobility, and with the policy of the opportunist statesmen of Elizabeth, one of theological compromise. In the history

of the Church of England the several elements of its composition predominate in turn: first the Genevan, which gives birth to the Lambeth Articles and the delegation to the Calvinistic Synod of Dort; then, under Laud, the Catholic; again, after a long period almost of torpor, the Evangelical; and now once more, in a large section of the clergy, the Catholic, though a small section is rationalist. The authority in this case is the Parliament, which originally settled the system without any real regard to Convocation, but in those times was itself Anglican, whereas it is now made up of men of all religions and of none. Such a state of things, if the Church of England is a spiritual body, cannot last long. She may be forced to break her political bonds, and dogmatic dissolution could hardly fail to ensue.

Practically the most important of the subjects with which M. Sabatier deals is the Protestant authority, that of the Bible. He seems fully to embrace the judgments of criticism, literary and historical: —

"In what condition do we actually find the text of the Old Testament Scriptures? Instead of the homogeneity

formerly attributed to them, we find in the historic books a fabric woven of documents yet more ancient, whose varicolored threads are easily distinguishable, making clear that the Pentateuch and the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings assumed their present form at a very late date. Furthermore, what a medley of disarrangement do we find in the prophecies of Isaiah, Zechariah, and Jeremiah, to speak only of those whose want of connection is visible to the unaided eye! What is the book of Psalms, if not the Psalter of the Jewish synagogue, made up of hymns of very different periods, already gathered into earlier collections? What shall we say under this head of Proverbs and the entire Solomonic literature, offshoots of which are found down to the second century before our era?" (p. 236.)

M. Sabatier abandons in plain terms the supernatural notion of the Bible and confesses that it is no longer the infallible rule of religious thought, the oracle of absolute and eternal truth. Yet he treats it still as the great aliment and support of spiritual life. He says that it "continues to discharge a double and essential function in the life of churches, families, and individuals; that it is no longer a code, but remains a testimony; is no longer a law, but is a means of grace; does not prescribe the scientific formulas of faith, but does remain the historic fountain of Christian

knowledge." Luther, he says, and Calvin, used the Bible freely as spiritual food without bibliolatry; Luther disparaging the Epistle of James, Calvin looking askance on the Apocalypse. To which it might be replied, in the first place, that Luther and Calvin brought with them confirmed convictions from their previous religious state; in the second place, that they were not common men. Simple souls can hardly be expected to make use of a great course of literature as food for spiritual appetite developed within themselves, injecting into it their personal thoughts and emotion. They crave for authority, or at least a positive rule such as they thought they had in the Bible, believing it to be throughout the inspired Word of God.

How, after the admissions which M. Sabatier has made, can he continue to speak of "the Bible" at all? How can he persevere in treating as a book that which is in fact a collection of books, independent of each other, and varying greatly in character, spirit, and value? The Old Testament is the whole of ancient Hebrew literature bound up together. The idea of God differs materially in different parts of it. The God of

Genesis is anthropomorphic, and the special deity of a patriarchal family. The God of Exodus, Joshua, and Judges is intensely tribal, sanctioning in the interest of the tribe wholesale massacre, as in the case of the Canaanites; treason, as in the case of Rahab; assassination, as in the case of Sisera; inflicting plagues upon all the Egyptians to make Pharaoh let the favored tribe go. This deity and the deity who makes Balaam's ass speak, who sends a lying spirit to Ahab, who makes bears kill a party of boys for mocking Elisha, is a conception surely lower than that of Deity in the second Isaiah, in Amos, in the more spiritual Psalms. The Psalms are manifestly by different hands. The spirit of some of them is gentle and beautiful. That of others is the reverse.

An attempt has been made to impart unity to the collection and at the same time to explain away its moral difficulties and give it as a whole the character of a progressive revelation by the help of that universal key, the principle of evolution. But no process of evolution can really be discerned. In the latest books of the series, those of Ezra and Nehemiah, there reigns the

narrowest tribalism, a tribalism which commands the Hebrew to put away his Gentile wife. Of the book of Esther it is only necessary to say that it is the source of the feast of Purim.

If the Hebrew literature is divested of the character of revelation, is it so immeasurably higher, morally and spiritually, than the Greek? The Greek pantheon, of course, is morally low, though sunny and inspiring to art. But the deity of Socrates, though indistinct and hardly personal, is sublimely moral. In the Hebrew literature there is, on the whole, not much of tenderness or affection. We have Ruth, it is true, we have the friendship of David and Jonathan, and some other touches of humanity. But there is no parting of Hector and Andromache. There is no Antigone or Alcestis. There is nothing like the sentiment of the Greek epitaph in which the dead wife says that of the two babes which she bore her husband, one she keeps with her as the pledge of his love, and the other she has left to be the prop of his old age. Sternness, amounting often to grimness, seems to be the general tone of the Old Testament.

Then, upon what principle would M. Sabatier

say, if belief in a supernatural revelation is to be discarded, are we to bind up the New Testament with the Old? The Deity and the religion of the Old Testament are tribal, and tribal they remain to the last. The God of the Chosen People might be destined to extend his sway over all the nations of the earth; but he would still be the God of the Chosen People. The God of the New Testament is the equal Father of all. The son of the carpenter at Nazareth would, of course, accept uncritically the sacred books of his nation with their traditional interpretations. But it was not from the narrative of the plagues of Egypt or of the slaughter of the Canaanites that he drew his ideas of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. If the religion of the New Testament owed its birth to that of the Old Testament, it was by repulsion as well as by production. Of the prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament, criticism has entirely disposed. The bigots of the Old Testament crucified the Teacher of the New. Nothing is more dear or familiar to us than the Bible as it is. Great indeed would be the wrench of parting with it. Yet nothing surely can be less rational than a volume in which

certain portions of Hebrew history and literature are bound up as identical in source and spirit with the Sermon on the Mount.

For my own part, I should prefer to rest the claims of Christianity to serious and unimpassioned consideration no more on anything mystical or esoteric than on anything supernatural, but rather on the evidence of the character, moral and social, which Christianity has produced, and the relation of that character to the progress of humanity. These are facts not less certain in their way than any that can be submitted to the investigation of science.

March, 1904.

XVI

THE TENDENCIES OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

SINCE Sabatier's work foreshadowing the decline of religious authority was noticed in the *Sun*, a movement has been on foot in Canada tending in the direction which it was then suggested that religious progress would be likely to take. It had its origin in Toronto, but its most congenial scene appears to be our Canadian Northwest, where everything is new, a population, being immigrant, is less bound by old ties, secular or religious, and the futility of dogmatic division is most apparent; where, moreover, the inconvenience of maintaining three churches for one congregation must be specially felt. It is proposed, and the proposal seems strongly supported, to unite the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational churches. The union is not to be one merely of pulpits and good works, but organic. As between the Methodists and Congregationalists, there would be little to sacrifice on either side

in the way of doctrine; there would be more between the Presbyterians and the other two classes, unless the Presbyterians have radically modified the Westminster Confession. The Congregationalists would have to sacrifice their theory of church government. Fusion of organizations, with their vested interests, might be more difficult than the fusion of doctrines. Perhaps the fusion of names might be most difficult of all. A fear has suggested itself that the result, instead of being an advance in liberalism, might be a consolidation of dogma on a large scale. But this seems unlikely. Sectarian bulwarks having once given way, the result probably would be an approach to a church of ethical, spiritual, and social brotherhood on Christian lines such as the Protestant churches are apparently tending to be.

I was sure to receive proofs of the impatience with which thorough-going materialists, elated by the grand discovery of evolution, regard those who hesitate to embrace at once the full materialist creed and say with its chief living expositor that the three great obstacles to our well-being are the beliefs in God, Free Will, and a Future Life. For my part, I have unfeignedly

professed my loyalty to Science. I heartily accept evolution, only pausing to see whether a discovery so recent as well as momentous has yet found its final level. I only ask that certain phenomena of human nature, its liberty of choice in action, its moral aspirations, its power of idealization, its finer affections, its sense of spiritual beauty, its conception of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, all in fact that constitutes what we have regarded as spiritual life, should receive fair consideration, and that we should be told whether these phenomena can be explained by evolution or by any process of material development. I hesitate also to admit the assumption that the evidence of our five senses, even with all our scientific aids, is a complete account of the universe, so as to shut out any indication that there may be in our nature of something beyond. Truth, welcome or unwelcome, we must embrace. In embracing it is our only salvation. But it is too much to say that proof of the materialist theory would be welcome. The theory means annihilation after a life as transitory as that of an insect; less jocund, it is to be feared, than that of an insect in the case of a very large

proportion of our race. Positivism seeks to console us with an attractive formulary setting forth the coöperation of successive generations in the furtherance of human progress. What interest can any generation have in a progress of which it will not personally partake or even be conscious? Besides, in what is the progress to end? Science says, in a physical catastrophe.

Not less fully do I accept the judgments of criticism on the authenticity of the Gospel narratives and the mythical element which they unquestionably contain. With the supernatural and miraculous, with what has hitherto been called revelation, we must evidently part. But the Character which has formed the Christian Ideal still remains. It is not only pictured in the Gospels, but reflected in the genuine writings of Paul. There remains also the doctrine to which Paul was a convert and which was preached with signal success by him. There remains the effect of that doctrine on the history of the civilized world. Loaded and sullied though Christianity has been by alliances with secular powers, theocratic usurpation, dogmatic bigotry, and sectarian strife, what moral influence can be traced in the progress

of humanity comparable to that of the belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man? There is surely nothing superstitious or reactionary in the recognition of experience embodied in the great facts of history.

April, 1904.

XVII

THE BIBLE: ITS CRITICS AND ITS DEFENDERS

We learn from the *Sun* that orthodoxy under the very eminent leadership of Dr. Patton is confronting heterodoxy on a decisive field in defence of the "full inspiration and supreme authority of the Bible as the word of God." It will be a momentous encounter. What are all our political questions compared with the question whether we have or have not the divinely inspired word of life?

Those whose opinions I share will be inclined to demur to the use in a critical discussion of the term "Bible," dear and familiar as that term may be. The founder of Christianity, a humble Galilean, naturally received with uncritical simplicity the sacred books and traditions of his nation. He accepted as historical the story of Jonah, and saw in the appellation of Jehovah as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob a proof that those patriarchs still lived. But Pharisaism

obeyed its instincts in crucifying the Founder of Christianity. The Anglican Articles say "the Old Testament is not contrary to the New." In some parts it is anticipative; but what can be more contrary to the brotherhood of man than the order to smite the Canaanites and utterly destroy them? What can be more contrary to the Christian rule of marriage than is the injunction of Ezra to the Jews to put away their Gentile wives? The God of the Old Testament to the last is tribal, though he is supreme over the gods of all the other nations and will some day make his tribe and worship supreme. The God of the New Testament is universal.

It is time that we should frankly treat as primitive the Old Testament stories of the Creation and the Deluge, which distinctly clash with the true revelation of science. They ought no longer to be taught to children. I recollect the ignominious struggles of a great geologist, whose lectures I attended in my youth, to reconcile scientific fact with established and consecrated belief.

The Old Testament has its sublimities, its beauties, its passages of advanced morality, both personal and social. In virtue of these it must

always hold its ground. The Mosaic law, whatever may be the date of its redaction, belongs in its character to a primitive era, and for that era is a notable advance in civilization. Recognizing primitive customs, it improves on them. It distinguishes wilful murder from accidental homicide, and confines to wilful murder the function of the avenger of blood. It forbids the taking of money as a satisfaction for blood, which was the general custom of primitive mankind. It condemns the hereditary blood feud. By providing judges and calling on the congregation to judge between the slayer and the avenger of blood, it puts private revenge under the control of public law. It limits the evil privilege of asylum. It limits paternal despotism, which among the Romans was unlimited, requiring a public process and the concurrence of the mother in the execution of the rebellious child. Recognizing polygamy, as in those days was inevitable, it guards against the evil jealousies and partialities of the harem. It even mitigates in some measure the barbarous laws of war, requiring that a garrison shall be regularly summoned, and forbidding the cutting down of the fruit trees,

the permanent wealth of the country, which was regularly practised by the Greeks. It extends a measure of protection to the feelings of captive women. It is singularly free from militarism, making no provision for a standing army, even foregoing forced service in war, and treating "peace in all your borders" as the highest blessing. It recognizes slavery, then universal, but mercifully interposes to some extent between the master and the slave. It however betrays its human origin in ordaining death for witchcraft. Nor can mere improvements on the tribal system, though remarkable and even wonderful, be said clearly to bespeak the intervention of God.

The Decalogue is very high morality for its day, as the continuance of its authority has proved, though its allusion to the Creation shows that it was not inspired by the Maker of the world. The Sabbath, while in its Jewish form it belongs to the past, has glided with rational modification into our inestimable Day of Rest.

If the grandeurs and beauties of the Old Testament are apparent, its weaknesses cannot well be concealed. Who can pretend to admire all the ecstatic utterances of Jeremiah and Ezekiel?

The book of Job has been lauded beyond measure. It has striking passages, and its theme is one of the deepest interest. But it signally fails to solve its problem, the compatibility of the sufferings of good men with the providence of God. Socrates, as reflected in Plato, is here clearly above Job.

Some passages in the Old Testament which are instinct with tribal cruelty and pander to the war spirit have borne very bitter fruit. A plea has been entered for the retention of these as congenial to a particular class of converts. It was for that very reason that Ulfilas, the apostle of the Goths, left the book of Kings out of his translation of the Scriptures.

Inspiration must be universal or none. We are not warranted in picking out certain passages and pronouncing them divine while the rest are human. A single error or immorality is fatal to the divine origin of the whole. That a divine Being should err or mislead is inconceivable. Not less inconceivable is it that he should have subjected himself in his operations to such a law as evolution, and then waited for Darwin to explain the dispensation to mankind.

Inspiration has not been defined, nor does it

seem that any distinct idea has ever been formed of the process. How was the divine mind communicated to the writer? By what signs or consciousness was the writer assured that he had become the penman of the Almighty and was authorized in that character to claim the trust and obedience of the world?

It seems to follow that the Old Testament ought not to be bound up with the New as the record of a continuous revelation, hard as it will be to dissolve the union between the two parts of our family Bible.

The value of the New Testament, to a rationalist, does not depend on the proof of apostolic or contemporary authorship, on the credibility of the miraculous parts of the narrative, or on anything that the higher criticism has swept or is sweeping away. It rests on the Character unmistakably portrayed, and on the doctrines which unquestionably gave birth to Christendom.

May, 1904.

XVIII

IS CHRISTIANITY DEAD OR DYING?

WHEN it is said that Christianity since the middle of the eighteenth century has been dead or dying, we must ask what is meant by Christianity. If what is meant is belief in the supernatural inspiration of the Bible, in miracles, in the creeds, Christianity unquestionably is dead or dying in critical minds. The miracles, we see, were a halo which gathered round the head of the Founder, superior to other such halos in that they are miracles of mercy, not of power. But the doctrine which is the vital essence of Christianity, belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, seems not yet to be dead or certainly dying.

During the first half of the eighteenth century spiritual life was at a low ebb, the main cause being the tyranny or torpor of established Churches. That was the day of Voltaire. But towards the end of the century there was a great revival. In

England there was outside the Establishment the Methodist movement under Wesley; inside the Establishment there was the evangelical movement, which had Christians of eminence at its head. From the religious zeal thus awakened, besides a moral and social reform, sprang great religious enterprises, missionary and philanthropic. The movement for the abolition of slavery and those for the redemption of suffering classes in England were Christian in spirit and were led by Lord Shaftesbury and other religious men.

The Reformation itself was a revival, and a revival not only from torpor and seeming death, but from depravation apparently the most fatal, from the Papacy of the Borgias and the reign of the Inquisition. Has polytheism, Buddhism, or Islam ever shown its inherent vitality by a similar revival?

The preaching of the Founder of Christendom, who taught the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, undeniably was the great awakening of spiritual life in the world. A world without spiritual life, or religion as the embodiment of that life, and regulated by social science solely in temporal interests, is perfectly conceivable.

But the religion which should take the place of vital Christianity is not. Renan says of the words addressed to the woman of Samaria that they are the essence of religion, and that if there are intelligent beings in other planets and they are religious, this and none other their religion must be.

The revelations of the physical world come to us through the action of high scientific intellects. Was it not possible that a revelation of the moral world should come to us through a character of unique excellence, benevolence, and beauty, preserved in its simplicity and purity by the pastoral isolation of Galilee?

The Positivist points triumphantly to the self-devotion of the Japanese sacrificing themselves for their country though they have, as he assumes, no religion. Is the diagnosis quite correct? When the Japanese rips himself up rather than surrender, what is his motive? Is it self-sacrifice like that of the Christian martyr, or an intense manifestation of the tribal instinct which passes from the animal to the human herd? In self-sacrifice for the good of humanity such as that of the Christian martyr there would seem to be an element of another kind.

An article published in the *North American Review* on "The Immortality of the Soul" has, it seems, saddened some of its readers. The admissions made in it saddened its writer. But it would sadden him and all of us still more to rest in untruth. He has shown that he so far refuses to believe that all ends here.

JULY, 1904.

XIX

THE TWO THEORIES OF LIFE

"You need not expect that people will stand aside because you have come. They are going to crowd you, and you will have to crowd them. They will leave you behind unless you leave them behind." Such, it seems, is the view of human society and life which can now be presented by educational authority. A generation ago this doctrine would have startled us. But we seem verging on an age of survival of the fittest, fitness being measured by force; of progress by destruction, of imperialism, of strenuous life. Against the prevailing tendencies vital Christianity, the belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, continues to struggle, though with a force impaired by its entanglement with beliefs which science and criticism have disproved, but which it is hard for an ordained clergy and ecclesiastical organizations to cast off. The world is again divided between

these tendencies and the parties to which they give birth, somewhat in the same way as at the time of the Reformation it was divided between Catholicism and Protestantism, when the lines of nationality were crossed and superseded by those of religious belief. Not that orthodox and titular Christianity by any means coincides with faith in human brotherhood and righteousness. Some churches have floated with the political tide. But of the essence of Christianity, as it is embodied in the Sermon on the Mount, not a little is now to be found outside the churches.

Christian ethic has suffered by a belief in the inspiration of the Gospels which has led to the acceptance of Oriental hyperbole as literal precept. The injunctions of forgiveness of injuries, taken literally, would be fatuous. But placability is not fatuous, or undignified. In a famous passage of Corneille's "Cinna," Augustus, after overwhelming the offender with a rehearsal of his misdeeds, changes his tone and says, "Let us be friends." Is Augustus lowered? Is there more dignity in the opposite sentiment, so frankly avowed in the columns of the *Sun* by a representative of the old Dispensation?

The Christian doctrine of fraternity is, at all events for many of us, more comfortable than that of mutual jostling and the survival of the strongest. We cannot all be foremost in the race of competition, we cannot all thrust each other aside, we cannot all climb over each other's heads. But we can all do our duty in our place; and if duty is the pledge of happiness, we can all in a measure be happy.

Is competition or coöperation the fundamental law of humanity? Take any product of human industry, a manufactured article, for instance; trace it back in thought to the multifarious agencies which in countries and ages widely apart have contributed to its production, and say whether it does not speak of a relation very different from that of herds of animals jostling each other. What is the mainspring of progress but coöperation?

Nobody could be more free from orthodox superstition of any kind than Carlyle, who in one of his Essays, after speaking of other agencies of progress, says: —

> Or, to take an infinitely higher instance, that of the Christian religion, which, under every theory of it, in the

believing or unbelieving mind, must ever be regarded as the crowning glory, or rather the life and soul, of our whole modern culture: How did Christianity arise and spread abroad among men? Was it by institutions, and establishments and well-arranged systems of mechanism? Not so; on the contrary, in all past and existing institutions for those ends its divine spirit has invariably been found to languish and decay. It arose in the mystic deeps of man's soul; and was spread abroad by the "preaching of the word," by simple, altogether natural and individual efforts; and flew, like hallowed fire, from heart to heart, till all were purified and illuminated by it; and its heavenly light shone, as it still shines, and (as sun or star) will ever shine, through the whole dark destinies of man.

It happened that when I laid down Carlyle there met my eyes a gilt cross on the spire of a Catholic church illumined by the sun. The cross was the emblem of all that was materially weakest, of slavery and the shameful death of the slave. The eagle was the emblem of the Roman Empire, the greatest embodiment of force which the world has ever seen. The eagle and the cross encountered each other. Which prevailed? It may be said, of course, that the cross represented a force. It did, but the force was not that of strenuous life and the big stick.

Once more I have not pretended, nor do I pretend, to advance any theory of the universe or of man. I only ask that before we embrace ultra-materialism, with its apparent corollaries, moral and social, all the real phenomena of humanity, not only those with which physical science deals and which Darwin's grand discovery covers, shall receive fair consideration, and among the rest the phenomena of history.

August, 1904.

XX

TELEPATHY

THERE appeared the other day in the London *Times* an account by Mr. Rider Haggard of a telepathic communication between him and his favorite dog which he evidently considered of great importance. It seems he had a nightmare in which he dreamed that his dog was being killed and cried to him for help. It turned out that the dog had been killed about that hour. It does not seem that the coincidence of time was exact, while as to the manner of the dog's death the dream gave no sign, or none that could be deemed a coincidence. The narrative, I confess, seemed to me less important as a proof of mysterious agency than as a proof of the extent to which fancy can operate on very slight materials, even in a strong mind. Mr. Haggard designates his dream as a nightmare; the cause of nightmare is indigestion; and it is difficult to believe that indigestion is a factor in the operations of the spirit world.

All the cases of telepathy of which I have read have seemed to me to resolve themselves either into fulfilments of natural expectations, as in the case of warnings that a person known to be sick is dead, or into accidental coincidences, of which in the chapter of accidents there are sure to be many, some of them curious and striking; the occurrence being afterwards dressed up by the retroactive imagination of which we are all apt to be the unconscious dupes. It has been remarked that there has often been a letter in the case and that the letters have not been produced.

I may mention an instance of accidental coincidence which fell within my own knowledge. A person living at Oxford was staying in a house at some distance from that city. Crossing a heath, he was attacked by faintness and lay for some time prostrate on the heath. When he got back to the house in which he was staying he found that at the very moment when he was lying on the heath a telegram had been received from his servant at Oxford asking whether it was true that he had died suddenly. Another person of the same name had died suddenly. This was the explanation. Had the fainting fit ended differ-

ently, here would have been a telepathic warning, and if not with a letter, with a telegram as its proof.

As to spiritualism, one can only wonder that the imposture should have survived such a series of exposures. It in fact exposes itself, since the spirits must materialize before we can be made sensible of their presence. The planchette has produced nothing but absurdities. Such a mode of communication adopted by spirits is in itself absurd. The delusion is probably kept alive by the craving for intercourse with the lost objects of affection. The premier medium of the day, illumined by a spirit which had entered him, recounted to me the misfortunes of my nephew, when a nephew I never had. In this case I rather suspected that the spirit was trading on a hint given by a friend who was himself misinformed. When I asked whether I was married, the answer was that I seemed to be alone in the material world and yet not alone.

It is needless to say that there has always been a craving for the supernatural, which has shown itself in the eclipses of religion. With the collapse of Roman religion came the mysteries of Isis;

with the collapse of mediæval Catholicism came the prevalence of astrology, which captured minds so powerful in different ways as those of Wallenstein and Kepler. Such fancies as spiritualism, telepathy, planchette, seem to be the offspring of a similar void in the soul, created by the departure of traditional religion. They will not help us to save or revive our spiritual life. They will act in the opposite way. They will seduce us into grovelling superstition. There are mental mysteries, no doubt, still to be solved by physiology. The creative action of the imagination in dreams is one of them. So is the general mystery, still profound, of memory. But there is no place for the supernatural. Let us put that away forever.

August, 1904.

XXI

SPIRITUAL *versus* SUPERNATURAL

I FIND that an expression used by me has been misconstrued. Referring to telepathy and other miracles, I said that there was no place for the supernatural. I did not mean to say that there was no place for the spiritual. Spiritual life, with its intimations, presents itself to me, not as supernatural, but as the natural though the highest development of humanity.

Another word on the subject of that paper. Some of us remember that the original form of these pretended manifestations was table-turning. Table-turning for a time was the rage. In the circle of my own acquaintance there was a man of considerable intellect and attainments who was carried away by this absurdity. I took part in an experiment, and plainly saw one of the party, unconsciously of course, pressing the table and making it turn.

"M. M." is apparently inclined to believe in

spiritualism because a female medium guessed his malady and the names of two of his relatives. Could inspiration do no better than this? These pretenders are of course adepts in the trade. They know how to fish out information and how to feel their way with an inquirer by observation of face and voice. My own experience has proved that the most famous of them, when craftily led on, can go utterly astray.

A story was told about Alexis, the great clairvoyant of his day, which, though no doubt a joke, probably pointed to the secret. A sceptic, it was said, made an appointment with Alexis for a séance and bade his wife at that time put the coal-scuttle on the drawing-room table. He returned converted, and reported to his wife that Alexis had told him that the coal-scuttle was on the table. "Bless me!" replied the wife, "I quite forgot to put it there."

For any strange manifestations of nervous sensibility, and for any thaumaturgic performances for which they may afford scope, we are of course prepared. A school-fellow of mine, a nervous boy, was thrown by mock-mesmeric passes into a trance to get him out of which medical assistance

was required. There are no doubt still mysteries in the physical nature of man. But they have nothing to do with spiritual life. There is no place for the supernatural, and in following that lure the spiritual may be lost.

The case of wireless telegraphy is cited. But can there be transmission without a medium? In the case of wireless telegraphy there is a known medium. In the case of telepathy no medium is known, nor does the existence of a medium seem possible.

SEPTEMBER, 1904.

XXII

A PROBLEM GREATER THAN TELEPATHY

THE last-cited case of telepathy is that of a loving wife filled with sudden anxiety by the silence of her absent husband, whom she afterwards finds to have been sick. Incidents such as this, dressed up by our retroactive fancy, become mysterious and the materials of a new faith. Our minds are thereby turned from questions really momentous in the solution of which we are called upon to help each other.

One writer in the telepathic discussion glances at the question of a future state in a way which seems to imply that he hardly deems it pressing. Yet surely no question can be more pressing, if we have any means of solving it, than that of existence after death. I avoid the phrase "immortality of the soul," because I cannot form an idea of immortality any more than I can of infinity or eternity, both of which elude conception.

Conscience tells us that according as we do well or ill in this life it will be well or ill for us here-

after. Is the evidence of conscience less trustworthy than that of our bodily senses? If the evidence of our bodily senses and the science built upon them alone is trustworthy, on what does their prerogative rest? May we not be in a universe unseen by Newton or Darwin?

That death wipes out the score of life and levels the best with the worst of men, the man who has been the benefactor with the one who has been the curse of his kind, is a belief from which our moral nature would seem to recoil as strongly as our physical nature recoils from anything contradictory of sense.

Positivism, in place of the hope of personal existence hereafter, presents to us impersonal existence as a factor in the progress of humanity. But that which is not personal is not ours.

What would be the consequence to society of the belief, if we should be driven to it, that death is the end? Would there be any rational inducement to self-sacrifice or effort for the common good? Would not struggle for the means of present enjoyment be in fact the true wisdom? Is not a tendency of this kind making itself felt as religious belief grows weak?

Old arguments of the natural kind no doubt are failing us. We can no longer hold with the good Bishop Butler that the soul is a being distinct from the body, indiscerptible, and therefore probably indissoluble. We know that what we call the soul is the consummate outcome of the general frame. Nor can we, with Socrates, found our faith on a preëxistence attested by the presence in us of innate ideas. When Socrates points to the distinction between the lyre and the melody as analogous to that between the body and the soul, a hearer replies at once that when the lyre is broken the melody dies. Of ghosts or spiritualist apparitions there is no need to speak.

We are met with the cases of idiots, lunatics, children dying in infancy, savages, and others, who have not seen moral light. That argument seems valid against universal resurrection, but not against the survival of responsibility where responsibility has been.

Conscience implies the existence of a deity, to whose tribunal it appeals, as to that of a power which upholds righteousness and directs all in the end to good. It implies, not the freedom of the will, if by that is meant independence of ante-

cedents, but volition, the reality of which extreme materialism seems to deny. The exact relation between the antecedents and the volition we may not be able to define. The impelling motive, as was said before, seems not to be the only factor in action of which we are conscious. We are conscious also of the exertion of the will, though not distinctly in actions where there is no conflict of motive, in actions where there is. The existence of volition, as well as of the antecedents, is assumed in all our judgments on our own actions and those of our fellows.

October, 1904.

XXIII

DR. OSLER ON SCIENCE AND IMMORTALITY

DR. OSLER'S erudite and elegant lecture on "Science and Immortality" has just come into my hands.

Dr. Osler plays gracefully with the subject. His own attitude towards the doctrine of a future life appears, to use his own phrase, to be "Gallionian." He seems to regard the doctrine as a beautiful but perfectly unpractical hypothesis. He winds up, indeed, with a faint affirmative and a *mallem errare cum Platone*. To me, I confess, the question seems one on which at the present time we can no more afford to err with Plato than we can to err with Eddy or Dowie.

Philosophic dalliance with the problem of a future state may be more congenial to Dives than to Lazarus. If there is nothing beyond this life, what a spectacle is the state of Lazarus in the slums of New York! What a spectacle is the life of the unfortunate generally! What a spectacle is His-

tory! Schopenhauer said, not that this was the worst of all conceivable, but that it was the worst of all possible worlds, and could not bear another grain of evil. There has been and is a terribly large proportion of the human race which might think that the pessimist told the truth. The crown of all things, Dr. Osler says, is man. If happiness is the criterion, what a crown!

"Immortality" is inconceivable. We must discard the term. The question is whether our hopes and responsibilities extend beyond this world and life. Conscience says that they do. Conscience tells us that this world, its awards and its judgments, are not all, but that as we do well or ill in this life, it will be well or ill for us in the sum of things. What question can be more practical? Even taking it on the lowest ground, what would our social state be if vice and wickedness had only to bilk human law? Would not self-sacrifice be folly and martyrdom insanity?

That physical science has nothing to say to this matter is true. But is physical science our only sure source of knowledge? Are our moral instincts less trustworthy than our physical sense? As I have already said, I affirm nothing; but I

call attention to the apparent fact that there is in man something of which the materialist still owes us an account. All may be, and in a sense no doubt is, the outcome of physical evolution. That does not seem to me to close the inquiry. Whatever the process of development, Dr. Osler is not a germ, but a man, well read in the noble literature of the seventeenth century.

That men go about their daily work thinking little of a future state, as Dr. Osler says, is perfectly true. But is not the influence of conscience, with what it implies, always there, unless it has been absolutely stifled, as in the case of consummate wickedness it probably is? Does not every man, when he obeys his conscience against his passions or his interest, virtually express a belief in something beyond this world?

"Teresianism," as Dr. Osler calls the fervent belief, such as was that of St. Teresa, in the life to come, has, as he admits, produced the salt of the earth, which a mere falsehood could hardly have done. On the other hand, what followed when French Jacobinism and Terrorism had written over the gate of the cemetery: "Here is eternal sleep"?

The dull submission of the dying to the inevitable, when, as in most cases, emotion is weakened, while death is often a release from pain, does not seem to me to go far toward proving that death is not a turning-point, but the end. From the old ecclesiastical terrors most men are now free.

The conclusions of extreme materialism would be welcome to few. But if the materialist proves his case, we acquiesce. There is no hope for us in our present perplexities but in the frank acceptance of all demonstrated truth.

October, 1904.

XXIV

DISPENSING WITH THE SOUL

ONE more word. On re-perusing Dr. Osler's very charming treatise, I find him saying that "modern psychological science dispenses altogether with the soul." With the soul as a separate entity breathed into the body at birth and parted from it at death all free thinkers now dispense. But has reason yet dispensed with spiritual life and its attendant hopes? Are we, as Dr. Osler apparently thinks, bound to admit the absolute prepotency of the "germ-plasm" and to assume that the limit of its physical development is the limit of ethical possibility? Is it not still conceivable that something different in kind from the germ-plasm may be the ultimate issue of the process? In fact, can one thing differ more in kind from another thing than Dr. Osler with his science and his culture differs in kind from the germ-plasm? If development goes so far, are

we warranted in assuming that it cannot go farther and culminate in spiritual life? Does the germ-plasm contain the whole productive power and all the promise in itself? Left to itself, would it come to anything? Is it not indebted for its development to the vivifying and moulding influences in which it is steeped? If it is, nothing in the germ-plasm itself can apparently be an absolute limitation. The germ is a starting-point, as was the particle in the nebula. The goal may be spiritual life; by which of course is meant not "spiritualism" or anything of that kind, but the life of moral aspiration and effort, with any promise or assurance which it may contain.

The authority of conscience is a dream; there is no moral tribunal higher than that of human opinion and law; death levels the good with the wicked, the sensualist with the pure of heart, the man who has been a blessing with the man who has been a curse to his kind. Such is the conclusion to which thorough-going materialism leads. We may have to face it. I have not said and do not say that we may not. But we want the question to be thoroughly discussed, and we maintain

that it is not fanciful or dilettantist, but practical in the highest degree. Apart from spiritual hopes, would not social morality feel the change? Is not social morality feeling the change already?

DECEMBER, 1904.

XXV

THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION

THE acceptance of my letters by the *Sun* has brought me many tokens of interest in the subject to which they relate. Some of my correspondents have asked me for my theory. But I have no theory. All I pretend to do is to state the case and invite opinion.

The subject is one of interest, practical as well as deep, were it only from its bearing on the future position of the clergy. What are clergymen on whose minds the light of criticism has dawned hereafter to do? Renan and others like him seem in effect to wish that the clergy should continue to preach a religion suited to the multitude, while they, the sons of light, sit aloft in light by themselves. But will learned and conscientious men, as your clergy must be, be found to preach wholesome falsehood for a State purpose, and, like Roman augurs, to laugh each other in the face when they meet?

If ultra-materialism is true, man is a mere development of the germ-plasm. There is no ground for belief in a moral government of the universe. Conscience, if it speaks of a tribunal higher than the human, lies. Death ends all for us, and levels us all. When we die, it signifies nothing whether our life has been good or evil. Materialists say that the evildoer will be punished by remorse for a wasted life. But how can his life be said to have been wasted if he has supped full of pleasure, gratified every passion, and bilked human justice? Positivism tells us that we shall live for good or evil in the future of the race. What interest, when we have personally ceased to be, shall we have in the future of the race? After all, in what will the race end?

Dogmatic and miraculous Christianity we resign. But the vital principles of Christianity, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, still rest on their historical and moral evidences as a key to the moral problem of our being. At the same time Christianity, by throwing off dogma and miracle, is rid of one of its heaviest burdens. There is no longer a barrier between Christendom and the rest of humanity. The term "heathen"

becomes unmeaning. Socrates, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, are no longer consigned to the uncovenanted mercies of God. We live henceforth under an ampler sky.

There is no use in guessing at the nature of the Power which fills and moves the universe. We cannot hope to delineate or define the inconceivable. The world visible to us presents to our senses a perplexing mixture of that which to us is good with that which to us is evil, of order with disorder, of beneficence with cruelty, of beauty with the unbeautiful. We cannot solve the mystery. Bridgewater Treatises, picking out instances of order and beneficence and saying nothing about the opposites, no longer afford us help. Human excellence is attainable only through effort, which implies a struggle with evil. This, apart from revelation, is apparently the only hint of a solution that we have. Yet it is difficult to believe that rational being is confined to this planet or that nothing speaks to us through the majesty and glory of the universe.

Conscience, says Bishop Butler, a keen anatomist of human nature, if it had power as it has authority, would rule the world. Conscience tells

us that as we do well or ill it will be well or ill for us in the end. Is this delusion? Is conscience or is it not really a part of our nature? If it is, have we any special ground for refusing its evidence more than for refusing that of our physical senses on which all science, moral or physical, rests? After all, what is truth but that which, by the constitution of our nature, we cannot help believing? Is any man without a conscience? There are men who crush it, perhaps silence it in themselves; but is any man without it?

That notions of duty vary considerably from age to age may be admitted. But conscience always declares for duty as we see it at the time against the forces of passion or self-love.

It may be true that conscience, like other parts of our nature, including the scientific faculties, is developed by an evolutionary process. This does not affect its authority. When developed, it is here. We must, however, be allowed to challenge the claim of the germ-plasm to prepotency and finality. The germ-plasm is the starting-point of a development which, carried forward and moulded by a variety of influences, culminates in Socrates.

But Socrates is not a germ-plasm any more than he is a particle in the nebula from which the germ-plasm itself is an emanation. That man had his foundation in the dust we have long believed. For dust put radium, if you will; but conscience, moral aspiration, spiritual affection, the sense of spiritual beauty, idealization, are, if our inner sense does not utterly mislead us, higher in their nature than dust.

FEBRUARY, 1905.

XXVI

IS MATERIALISM ADVANCING?

It would seem that the answer to the question whether materialism has been making way must partly depend on the meaning attached to the word. My friend Professor Tyndall, as I think I have said before, called himself, and insisted upon being called, a materialist, because, as a man of science, he believed that in matter was the potentiality of all things. Yet in sentiment, character, and aspirations no human being could be less material. In this I believe he was the type of many who, though they have embraced the materialist hypothesis, remain spiritual in character and aim.

It can scarcely be denied that between the higher criticism on one side and Darwin's momentous discovery on the other, materialism, in the scientific and philosophic sense, positive or negative, is gaining ground. We are called upon at all events to find a new warrant for spiritual life, for

reliance on the dictates of conscience, for any hopes that we may have cherished of existence beyond the grave, for confidence in a divine order of the universe. We can no longer believe that the miscellany of Hebrew writings, many of them of doubtful authorship and date, some of them plainly mythical, are a divine revelation. Nor is anything to be hoped from an attempt to evade the difficulty by suggesting that Deity, in its dealings with man, had to accommodate itself to the Darwinian law of evolution. Of the Gospels, criticism has spared only the character and teachings of Jesus, which, on any hypothesis, have given birth to Christendom. In the authenticity, contemporaneity, harmony of the documents, we can confide no more. We can no longer sincerely accept the evidence for the Incarnation, the Immaculate Conception, the miracles, the Resurrection; or deem it such as would certainly have been given in proof of a revelation which was to be the light of the world. Moreover, the Fall being a myth, as it is now allowed almost on all hands to be, there is no ground for the Incarnation and the Atonement, a disclosure which in itself is fatal to the dogmatic and traditional creed of

Christendom. Nor, we must sorrowfully confess, is the collapse of our evidences limited to the case of revelation. It extends to that of natural religion. Bishop Butler's proof of immortality, resting on the separate existence of the soul as an entity breathed into the body at birth and released from it at death, has been swept away by evolution. Theism itself has been seriously called in question, and arguments founded on the proofs of universal beneficence, such as the writers of the Bridgewater Treatises deemed conclusive, will unhappily no longer avail. The wrench is great; but through frank abandonment of that which cannot be sustained lies our only road to truth.

For the first time perhaps in history, man stands with his unassisted reason, independent of any revelation or tradition, in face of the mystery of his existence and of the order of the universe. If there is any historical precedent, it is probably the position of the Greek philosophers. But the Greek philosophers were children in science. Their cosmic speculations were ingenious guesses. Besides, they had not absolutely renounced the State religion. Socrates worshipped the gods of the State, and bequeathed an offering to Æsculapius. Little will

be found in the Greek philosophy at all helpful to present investigation. The thought of the Roman stoics was given to the formation of personal character. Nor is there much to aid us in the philosophy of the Voltairean era. It had no Darwin. It is extremely controversial, and therefore wanting in breadth and in calmness of vision. Besides, neither Voltaire nor Rousseau is independent of theistic tradition. Voltaire, as we remember, avowed his belief that the fear of God was necessary to save our throats from being cut; and he built a church with the inscription, "Deo Erexit Voltaire," which, if he had said what he felt, would perhaps have been "Voltairio Erexit Deus."

No one surely can treat these questions lightly. No one can think that even in a social point of view it matters nothing whether death ends and cancels all or whether conscience is a delusion. Dr. Osler may be right in saying that most people think little about a future life. This may be partly because the future life has been presented to them in a guise which no mind can grasp, and which is at variance with their practical sense of justice and mercy. Still, the belief has been there; and so has the authority of conscience. The

churches are a momentous part of our social organization, and on these beliefs they rest. Habit and opinion will sustain them, probably are now sustaining many of them, after the departure of positive belief. They may glide, as not a few of them are now gliding, into social congregations, spiritual in their tone, with moral objects, and under highly cultivated leadership. There are already inklings of such a change.

Inquiry has happily become earnest, calm, and tolerant. It may yet end in inducing the germplasm to limit its unbounded pretensions and leave room for the continued existence of spiritual life, and of such hopes as may reasonably be attached thereto. A new religion independent of tradition may yet be born.

In the meantime there is a natural tendency to take refuge in fantastic speculations of the spiritualist kind against which we have to be on our guard.

April, 1905.

XXVII

DOUBT AND ITS FRUITS

"B. D., Oxon.," I can conscientiously assure him, mistakes my position if he thinks that my object is destructive. That which cannot be maintained, it seems to me, we ought frankly to resign, that we may hold fast that which can. What is really injurious to the clergy is the suggestion that they should continue to preach for purposes of expediency that which has ceased to be believed. To what extent the doubts manifestly prevalent among the laity may have spread to the clergy, I do not pretend to say. That they have spread to some extent surely cannot be gainsaid.

The volume of letters about religion entitled "Do We Believe?", a selection from nine thousand sent to the *London Daily Telegraph* in three months, is a proof that the subject has living and general interest. This book is a fair mirror of opinion, and in two respects is

welcome. It proves at once the triumph of toleration and the earnestness of quest for truth. Of dogmatic narrowness or bitterness there is hardly a trace. We are in a far better and more hopeful state than Christendom was a hundred years ago.

The collection is divided into three parts: "Faith," "Unfaith," and "Doubt." Doubt is hardly distinguishable from Unfaith. Nor does Faith make any serious stand for the evidences. The stand it makes is for Christian character and the consolations of religion. Even Archbishop Temple, when interrogated about the miracles, can only say that omnipotence had always power to perform them, and that the absence of them in our day is no proof of their absence in past times; two propositions which a sceptic might subscribe. Unfaith and Doubt are left in possession of the critical field, and they are able to cite startling admissions on the clerical side, such as that of an ecclesiastic of eminence who gives up as mythical the virgin birth of the Redeemer.

On the other hand, Unfaith and Doubt generally accept the Christian view of character and the Christian rule of life. They place happiness in

benevolence, which is taken to be its own reward. On what is that assumption founded if there is no God or Hereafter? If conscience is a delusion, and death clears all scores, what have we to say to the man who indulges his lust and escapes the law? He may be a social nuisance, but how can you show that, from his own point of view, he is unwise? "Man," says one bold doubter, "lives in a world which gets its living by lying and deceit. You must fight that world with its own weapons. And if you are sharp enough, you will become a respected member of society." What have we to say to the man if he wins his game?

If this life is all, what a spectacle is history! What is there to redeem the picture of the barbarism or pain and misery in which myriads have lived and died, in which millions are still living and dying? Is it easy to confute the pessimist who wishes that such a world had never been?

A bishop is cited as averring that the doctrine of the Sermon on the Mount would never do for foreign policy or for the management of States. The precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are in the language of Oriental hyperbole. However, they are not meant for foreign policy or for the

management of States, which Jesus never had before his mind, but put aside with the precept, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." Jesus recognized the calling of the soldier and the authority of public law. St. Louis of France acted even in his foreign relations on the Christian principle, with results not altogether disastrous.

If, as the result of this discussion, theism loses revelation, it ceases to be perplexed by attempts to grasp eternity and infinity, to excogitate a *primum mobile*, to reconcile almighty goodness with the existence of evil. Is conscience the voice of the Power which rules our world? Are moral effort and struggle towards perfection the dispensation under which we live? If so, our life is not without a guiding light.

Immortality passes our conceptions. We now know, too, that the soul is not a being separate from the body, enclosed in it at birth and severed from it at death. Still, spiritual life may be a reality and may be instinct with further hopes. The impersonal immortality in the progress of the race which Positivism offers us is little consoling. If a man contributes to the progress of the race, and in that sense lives in it, so it may be said does anything that helps progress, a beast of burden or a machine.

Christianity, ceasing to be a revelation, does not cease to be moral light. It has produced Christendom, and Christendom has been nearly conterminous with moral civilization. This is matter of history. Nor has the moral influence of Christianity been confined to the doctrinal pale. What is to be the moral code of materialism we have yet to learn. The moral code of agnosticism is still Christian.

Let me repeat that I do not presume to broach a theory. My aim is only to keep in the right path, frankly to resign whatever has been disproved, to be cautious in accepting the extreme conclusions of a new-born materialism riding on the wings of a grand discovery, and to avoid the misleading fancies which swarm in the eclipse of religion, such as spiritualism, clairvoyance, planchette, and telepathic revelation. Especially do I wish to challenge proof of the assumption, fatal to spiritual life and its hopes, that the germ-plasm, as it is the beginning of our being, must be the limit of its development and its end. In this at all events I may hope to have "B. D., Oxon.," on my side.

MAY, 1905.

XXVIII

THE ANGLICAN PETITION FOR FREEDOM

I THANK the *Sun* for putting me in a right light and pointing out that my object is not to aid in destruction, but rather to ascertain the real limits of the destructive process, and especially to challenge what appeared to me to be the extreme assumptions of the materialist school. We seek, amid these troubled waters, to find, if possible, some anchorage for a reasonable faith.

The inquiry is partly historical, and as such comes within the province of a student of history. The part which is strictly theological would more properly belong to our theological guides if only their thought and utterance were free.

A number of Anglican divines, including some of rank and reputation, plead for liberty to deal honestly with the New Testament in the light of critical investigation. By the heads of the Canadian Church at Montreal they are pointed to the door and told that in that way they may save their

honor; as though honor were separable from loyalty to truth. This awakens us to the disadvantage under which this vital inquiry is being pursued. The clergy of all denominations, the men by vocation set apart, by their training specially equipped, by their personal aspirations dedicated to the service of spiritual life, are by their ordination vows debarred from conscientious inquiry. They are fettered by doctrinal chains forged in days of imperfect knowledge and sectarian strife, in some cases fully as much by the hand of political power as by that of theological conviction. Is it not our interest that they should be set free?

To take the case of the present remonstrants. I happened many years ago to be the guest of my revered and beloved friend Archbishop Tait when he was called upon to decide a question of ritual. Being occupied at the time, he turned me into his library to look up the historical point for him. In doing so I could not help being struck with the fact that the code of belief and worship by which all the clergy of the Church of England were to be unalterably bound was the motley and ambiguous product of a series of revolutions,

all of which were the immediate work, not of spiritual authority or conviction, but of political power, and of political power in far from spiritual hands. The first two revolutions, that conducted by Thomas Cromwell and the reaction which afterwards followed the change of ascendency in the King's Council, were the work of Henry VIII. The third was the work of the intriguing politicians who formed the Council of Edward VI. The last, and that which has left the deepest trace, was the work of Elizabeth, for whose character unspiritual is the mildest term, and of the worldly-wise statesmen of her reign. Through all the stages of the transition the secular power can be proved to have been supreme. The ecclesiastical Convocation was set at naught. The Anglican compromise between the old and the new faith which the statesmen of the reign of Elizabeth installed might be politic for the time, but interest, not conviction, is the region of compromise, and the history of the Anglican Church has been an intermittent wrestle between the Catholic and Protestant ideals, closely connected with political party, which under Charles I. broke out in political revolution. This may be said without

withholding from Anglican piety its due or failing to recognize the service done by it to Christendom.

We now see the two elements contending for the possession of the Church under the supremacy of a Parliament for which Anglican belief is no longer a qualification and in which religious interests of any kind can hardly be said to prevail. High Churchmen are desperately contending for the liberty of interpreting the Protestant Articles by the light of the semi-Catholic Liturgy. The Articles were framed after the Liturgy and are a dogmatic and original manifesto, which the Liturgy is not. Rich though such an institution may be in personal and pastoral excellence, how can its formularies be, as the Montreal Episcopate seems to think that they are, a final determination of religious belief?

What is said of the Anglican Church may be said of all other churches, the clergy of which are bound by stereotyped creeds, products of antiquated controversy or enthusiasm now extinct, and by ordination vows. Little, it would seem, can be done by revising the Thirty-nine Articles, the Westminster Confession, or any other standard of belief. To prove all things

and hold fast that which is good is surely the only ordination vow fit to be imposed at the present time upon a keeper and teacher of religious truth. If amid these doubts and difficulties we look to the clergy for guidance, ought we not to begin by setting them free? Freedom would entail no secession, no renunciation, no change of conviction other than such as conscience might require.

While I write, a Presbyterian clergyman is praying for complete emancipation from the shackles of the Westminster Confession.

May, 1905.

XXIX

THE REMEDY FOR RELIGIOUS DOUBT

THE *Sun* has been receiving communication speaking bitterly of these letters. Their writer does not fail to receive outpourings of feeling, now from the side of orthodoxy, which denounces him as an atheist, now from the side of ultra-materialism, which taxes him with cowardly adherence to theistic superstition. He is but one of many who in these days of perplexity and doubt are trying to find some secure foundation for belief in the moral government of the universe, in the authority of conscience, and in the more hopeful view of the change which is to take place at death. For the aged perhaps the last question has more pressing interest than for the young.

The *Sun* tells us that there is an increase of formal membership in the orthodox, a decrease in the more rationalistic, churches. Granting this to be the case, does it denote a decrease of rationalism and an increase of orthodox belief?

Would a seceder from an orthodox Church be likely at once to register himself elsewhere? Is formal membership proof of unshaken conviction? Judging from my observation in England, I should say that it was not. Does not this increased resort to æsthetic attractions betray a feeling of mistrust? Do we not hear from one church after another, now from the Presbyterian, now from the Anglican, an appeal of conscientious and enlightened clergymen for a removal or relaxation of tests? Has not unrest been disclosed by a series of trials for heresy? Have not leading clergymen of the Church of England petitioned for liberty to deal freely and critically with the New Testament? Has not Presbyterianism produced the writings of Robertson Smith? Is not the "Encyclopædia Biblica," in which the resurrection of Christ is treated as a vision, edited by a Canon of the Anglican Church and professor of theology at Oxford? We surely have come to a crisis in the history of religion and all that rests upon it.

There might be less disposition to cling to traditional formularies of belief and greater willingness to set the clergy, our natural guides, free from their present shackles if we had present

to our minds the extent to which denominational creeds had been fixed, not by spiritual authority of any kind, but by secular power, and largely for political ends. In the case of the Anglican Church it may, I think, be clearly shown that from the commencement of the religious revolution under Henry VIII. to its close under Elizabeth the representation of the clergy never had an effective voice. Convocation, had it been allowed, would have perpetuated the Catholic settlement of Mary; and of the episcopate, in the eyes of Anglicans a special channel of true belief, all the members but one, or if Sodor and Man is to be counted, two, resigned. In the Scotch Reformation also influence distinctly political was very strong.

One is surprised to find that a champion of Catholicism writing to the *Sun* can point to 300,000,000 nominal Catholics as testifying by their unshaken belief to the stability of his church. In the Papal city itself, while Ignatius Loyola still rests in his shrine of lapis lazuli and gold, not far off rises the statue of Giordano Bruno, erected by "the age which he foresaw" on the spot where he was burned. But where would

even nominal Catholicism now be if political power had not in Italy, France, Spain, Austria, Bavaria, the Spanish Netherlands, forcibly crushed freedom of inquiry? The principle on which after the Thirty Years' War the States of Germany were practically settled was that the political sovereignty should determine the State religion. With political liberty has come freedom of thought, and with freedom of thought the questionings about traditional belief and about the mysteries of our being to which only reasonable satisfaction can put an end.

Let those who shrink with horror from the spread of free inquiry draw encouragement and charity at the same time from a grand example. Gladstone, as Morley's Life of him shows, was to the end of his days a High Churchman, intensely religious, a believer in special providence, in the inspiration of Scripture, in the efficacy of prayer. Yet he could not only associate and act heartily with free thinkers, but look with satisfaction on the activity of the general conscience, and say that while there had never been an age so much perplexed with doubt, there had never been one so full of the earnest pursuit of truth.

JUNE, 1905.

XXX

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

We are told that the origin of life has at last been discovered. This, if it is true, might seem to make the case in favor of materialism complete. But is it the origin of life that has been discovered or only the beginning of life on this planet? That sooner or later the beginning of life on this planet would be discovered by science was almost certain. But the beginning of life on this planet cannot be assumed to be its origin. Something there must apparently have been in that particular particle in which life commenced distinguishing it from other particles and from matter in general. If the source of this has been found, the origin of life has been discovered; otherwise what has been discovered is not the source, but only the beginning. The proof of physical evolution is heartily accepted. But as at present advised, we challenge the assumption that physical development out of a germ-plasm is the beginning and end of all.

We must be patient and make it our great aim at present to keep on the right path to truth. It is said that we need not fear the ascendency of materialism, since at present "Psychism" is coming on us in a flood. Yet spiritualism, wrongly so called, since the apparitions have to materialize in order that their presence may be felt, seems to have been pretty well exploded, with all its accessories, table turning, clairvoyance, and planchette. Professor Hyslop gently rebuked me the other day for requiring that the communications of the spirit should be dignified. The showmen of the spirits, however, deem it necessary to maintain that they are.

Telepathy still claims recognition; but no attempt has yet been made on behalf of this wireless telegraphy of the soul to suggest a possible medium of transition.

Undoubtedly there are mysteries still to be explored in our physical nature. The mystery of memory, for example, and that of the creative imagination in dreams. But no discoveries in this direction apparently can confirm the authority of conscience or establish the foundations of religion.

An eminent Canadian journal contends that what appears to be the disturbance of religious belief is in fact merely the progress of theological science, analogous to the progress of other sciences. It asks whether, when all the other sciences are advancing, we can expect the "queen of the sciences" to stand still. The term "queen of the sciences" applied to theology is mediæval, and what the queen of mediæval science was, the perusal of a few pages of Thomas Aquinas will show. Mediæval theology assumed as postulates the very things which are now in question, and spun out from them an immense web of deductions which were taken for supreme truth. The mediæval queen of the sciences is to-day as dead as alchemy.

JUNE, 1905.

XXXI

RATIONAL CHRISTIANITY

THE present writer's "attitude toward Christianity" has been the subject of lively comment in clerical quarters. He is denounced as an "atheist," a term which seems to be deemed applicable to one who, though he has by no means renounced theistic belief, has lost faith in the evidences of a miraculous revelation and in the authority of dogma. My attitude, and I apprehend not mine alone, is that of one who has heard the words of the Founder of Christendom on a hillside in Galilee. No miracle was needed to confirm belief in his words, nor was any performed by him on that occasion. Of dogma nothing fell from his lips.

The evidence of Christianity to people of my way of thinking is the character which it has produced and the effect which its approximate influence has had on the progress of mankind, notwithstanding all the adverse forces, including

the perversion of religion itself by Popes, Inquisitions, Jesuits, and fanatics of various kinds. No other creed, Buddhist, Mohammedan, or Rousseauist, has shown such power for good.

"I express myself with caution lest I should be mistaken to vilify reason, which is indeed the only faculty we have to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself; or be misunderstood to assert that a supposed revelation cannot be proved false from internal characters." So says Bishop Butler, of all apologists the greatest. If reason has been given us by the author of our being as our guide and our sole guide to truth, are not the discoveries of science and criticism as really revelations as though they had been dictated to an inspired penman or proclaimed amid the thunders of Sinai?

Of the miracles not one is better attested than the casting out of devils into a herd of swine at Gadara. Mark the apologetic agonies of Dean Farrar and other orthodox commentators in dealing with this passage. Are their devices less injurious to Christianity than the belief that in this case as in many others there has gathered about the adored head a halo of miracle; miracle in this case,

like the character, wholly beneficent, not destructive or mere display of power?

As to dogma, the whole structure apparently rests on the Mosaic account of the Creation and of the Fall of Man. Without the Fall there could have been no room for the Incarnation and the Atonement. But who, in the face of the discoveries of science, can continue to believe in the Mosaic account of Creation and the Fall of Man?

It must be added that throughout the Bible, and notably in the Gospel histories, the presentation is distinctly geocentric. To those writers this earth of ours, and the heaven which over-arched it and was the abode of Deity, were the universe. This earth was the entire scene of divine action. Man was the sole object of divine care. Astronomy has now taught us that heaven is not an arch over this planet and that there are more worlds than one.

August, 1905.

XXXII

FREE THOUGHT AND CHURCHMANSHIP

THE question was started by a critic the other day whether a Christian of my way of thinking could be a member of the Anglican Church. A professor of the Anglican creed he could not be, though he might sit in an Anglican pew. But he might find himself in other respects out of place. I attend a church where I am safe against religious recognition of war. Till materialism has thoroughly proved its case, a man, as I said before, will hardly do well, as it seems to me, in cutting himself off from religious life.

Extreme materialism lays it down that the three great obstacles to our well-being are the belief in a God, the belief in immortality, and the belief in the freedom of the will. It is not easy to see what special harm pure theism has done. Its effects might be thought even to give it some claim to consideration as a practical key. Immortality in the strict sense is unthinkable, and

the doctrine has been presented in a form which shocks. But without that belief in accountability which is the support of conscience the world would hardly have been better than it is.

Nor apparently would man have been better braced for improving effort by the belief that he was an automaton and that responsibility was a dream. The frank abandonment of that which reason, our only guide, as Bishop Butler says, has disproved is the first step toward the attainment of truth. Free thought does frankly abandon, although it may be with a sigh, whatever science and criticism have disproved. It admits the difficulty of the theistic hypothesis arising from the conflict in the universe of that which seems to us disorder and evil with that which seems to us order and good. It lays Paley's "Evidences" and the Bridgewater Treatises on the shelf.

But reason surely bids us be on our guard, not only against the influence of tradition which now, among the educated, lingers chiefly in clerical circles, and even there is tempered by "Lux Mundi," but against the rush of physical discovery and the immediate assumption that the germ-plasm which science, overturning our infan-

tine creeds, has shown to be the beginning of human life, must carry in it the limitation of human development, aspiration, and hope.

That surely is a critical moment in the history of man in which he first confronts the enigma of the universe and of his own being and destiny with reason enlightened by science and unclouded by tradition. Single thinkers may have done this before. But they were still in the penumbra of tradition and had comparatively little of the light of science. Tradition could still tender as evidence of the Noachic deluge the finding of fossil shells at high elevations, and philosophy could reply that the shells were cockles dropped by palmers from their hats in crossing the mountains.

Can these inquiries be deemed profitless? Does it matter nothing to a man whether his death may be change in being or annihilation? Does it matter nothing to society whether the witness of conscience is true? Dr. Osler makes light, and thinks that people in general make light, of the question about the immortality of the soul. Perhaps, as was hinted before, the form in which the doctrine was presented, repelling

belief, has had something to do with the levity. However, Dr. Osler is happy in this life. So probably it would be found are most of his Gallionian compeers. But if happiness is the object, and this life is the end, what balm has Dr. Osler for the less fortunate?

"M. C. G." arraigns me as a destroyer of the supernatural, without which he deems we should be lost. This seems to imply that God is not in nature. But the theist believes that God is in nature and is manifested through it.

SEPTEMBER, 1905.

XXXIII

RELIGION AND MORALITY

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Sun*, after asking whether religion was the only vehicle by which ethics could be instilled into the mind of a child, went on in effect, if I understood him aright, to discard religion as a basis of morality, holding our only moral standard to be "the will and opinion of the majority." The religious basis he regards as a figment of the sacerdotal caste. Some religious systems, he says, have been lowering to humanity; which is unquestionably true.

To fabricate a religion, or uphold one which had been proved false, as a foundation for morality would plainly be worse than folly. That house would be built on something weaker than sand. Let us all lay this to heart.

The will and opinion of the majority would furnish a rule and criterion of social action and, embodied in municipal law, would regulate the conduct of those who were unable to defy or elude

the law. Would they move to virtuous effort, to the formation of a high character, to benevolence, to self-sacrifice? Take the whole vocabulary of moral aspiration, excellence, and beauty; translate it into that of conformity to the will and opinion of the majority, and a great deal would surely be lost.

Under many forms and names, as self-culture, benevolence, self-devotion, patriotism, pure love, even as poetry and sense of beauty, something seems to be at work in the universe and to be approximately asserting itself, which is not the will and opinion of the majority or mere social expediency, and which takes the forms of religions varying in their character and dignity. The Greek pantheon is sensual. The State religion of Greece is irrational. But in Greek sentiment, as expressed in history, drama, poetry, even apart from philosophy, you find that which seems to be not the will and opinion of the majority or expediency in any form, but the essential spirit of religion.

Even in our respect for the sanctity of human life is there not a certain religious element? Could it exist in full force without the idea of a brotherhood of man, which seems to imply, if not

a distinct belief in the fatherhood of God, something beyond mere identity of species? Is not a somewhat diminished sanctity of human life already showing itself as a concomitant of the decay of religion?

One correspondent of the *Sun* seems to suspect that those of my way of thinking are edging towards mediæval faiths which have faded away. For my part toward nothing mediæval am I conscious of edging. Mediæval dogmatism denounces me as an atheist. I have made it clear, I hope, that I presume not to propound any theory of my own. I fully share the doubts and perplexities of the time. I only plead for three things. The first is a recognition of the vital importance, even on social grounds, of the question between extreme materialism and faith in spiritual life. The second is fair consideration of all the phenomena of humanity and not of physiological phenomena alone. The third is a perfectly free, however cautious and reverent, search for truth. That there is at present "something in this world amiss" is terribly certain. Faith and hope quail before the proofs of it. But something is struggling to "unriddle" it, and it seems too early yet to succumb

to the belief that we are only a very superior class of the beasts that perish, some of us, no doubt, with much higher pleasures, but all of us with keener, and too many of us with infinitely keener, pains.

October, 1905.

XXXIV

THE CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCHES

THIS anxious conference of the Churches shows that they believe a religious crisis to be at hand. It is a social crisis also. Though the ideas of God and a future state may not have been very distinct or always present, who can doubt that they, with conscience, the authority of which depends upon them, have had a practical influence; that they have reconciled people in general to the dispensation and to the terrible inequalities of the human lot? Social science in the end may take their place. But there seems not unlikely to be a perilous interregnum. Do we not already see an increase of intensity in the struggle for the wealth and pleasures of this world?

It is difficult to get true statistics of church-going, still more difficult to learn how much of it is religious, how much is social. That a good deal

of it is social appears certain. In the case of the State Church of England not a little of it probably is political. I think I have even known churches to be built or restored from political motives by avowed sceptics. The State Church is torn by parties which would break it up were not the ecclesiastical polity maintained by a Parliament full of dissenters and unbelievers. In all the Churches, notably in those of which the clergy are most highly educated, there are searchings of heart, heresy trials, struggles to loosen the bonds of the old creeds, such as the Westminster Confession. Even in the Anglican Church free criticism of the Bible has been gaining ground and High Churchmen write such books as "Lux Mundi." Anglicans are struggling to get rid of the Athanasian Creed, though only in paradoxical and denunciatory form does it differ from the other creeds. The Mosaic account of the Creation and the Fall of Man may be said to have been generally abandoned. With it apparently must go the dogmas of the Atonement and the Incarnation. We are not at liberty to rationalize the sacred narrative and substitute for that which science has confuted a pure invention of our own. On what

grounds then could the Unitarians be excluded from the conference of the Churches?

Christianity was in its origin a moral, not a dogmatic revelation. In its great manifesto, the Sermon on the Mount, there is not a word of dogma. Nor is there anything really dogmatic in the Epistles of St. Paul, though dogma of rather a portentous kind has been distilled from them. Their soul is passionate love of the character of the Founder, with fervid faith in the new morality. Dogma makes its first appearance in the Fourth Gospel, which is proved by other signs to be the work not of a Palestinian but of an Alexandrian Jew. Now comes Hellenic theosophy with its metaphysical theories about the nature of Deity, its Logos, its Homo-ousians and Homoi-ousians, its Trinitarian orthodoxies and Arian heresies, its Decrees of Ecclesiastical Councils regulating theological fancies and making profession of them a condition of Christian membership as well as a test of Christian faith. Then, the Church having become the thrall of the State, and that State being the Byzantine despotism, orthodoxy becomes loyalty and heresy becomes treason. State persecution is the natural result.

Presently we have Popes instigating the Norman to the conquest of England and Ireland in the interest of the faith. Innocent III. exterminating the Albigenses, the Inquisition with its autos-da-fé, religious wars, Jesuitism, the St. Bartholomew, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the Dragonades follow in due course.

The Reformation, where it prevailed, got rid of Papal despotism, of sacerdotalism, of asceticism, of thaumaturgy, of saint worship, and presently of persecution. But it did not get rid of dogma. It rather fell back on dogma as a pledge of stability and security in place of the authority of the Church. It kept religious belief subject to political authority. That principle is professed in one case and more or less practised in all. The political influences of that hour are not very strong warrants for everlasting and universal truth.

Mutual toleration and charity there may at once be to any extent, and they are invaluable. Of reunion there seems to be little hope otherwise than by going back from Alexandria, Nice, Constantinople, Rome, Geneva, Augsburg, Zurich, and Canterbury, to the hillside in Galilee and the moral revelation proclaimed there. But at all events

tests may at once be relaxed, and those who are elected and have been equipped to act as our spiritual guides may be set at liberty to speak the truth.

DECEMBER, 1905.

XXXV

WHAT DO WE OWE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT?

KIND "Orthodoxy," taking pity on one gone astray, sends him a passage from the Old Testament, striking enough, as "Orthodoxy" thinks, to have the effect upon him of a miraculous resurrection from the dead.

Of the changes that I have seen in a long life not one is more momentous than the change in the position of the Bible. As the collection of a national literature, intensely interesting and sometimes spiritually grand, the Old Testament will live forever. As a supposed course of divine revelation it has yielded to critical inquiry. The reputed authorship of much of it has been disproved, and it has been shown to be a human mixture not only of that which is sublime with that which is the reverse of sublime, but of good with evil. Vain, surely, is the attempt to restore its unity and divinity by any application to its ethics of the Darwinian theory of evolution. Would

Deity in revealing itself to man stoop to personate the primitive delusions of the human mind and the lower stages of human morality? In what, after all, does the supposed evolution end? In persistent tribalism, in Pharisaism, in the crucifixion of the Great Teacher of Humanity, in the narrow ceremonialism of the Talmud.

It might be difficult to say what on the whole the effect of belief in the inspiration of the Old Testament on character and progress has been. The opening of Genesis is sublime, as Longinus felt. It seems, compared with what follows, the work of a superior mind. But devout belief in it has barred, nearly down to our own day, rational inquiry into the history of the planet and the origin of man. Two generations ago scientific lecturers might be heard pitiably struggling to force science into conformity with faith. Then, from the grand "Let there be light!" we drop to the God who makes man of dust, woman of man's rib, and manufactures coats of skin for them. We have God walking in the garden in the cool of the evening. We have the Tree of Knowledge and the talking Serpent. The patriarchs living nine centuries, the giants, the Deluge with its infantine

delusions and impossibilities, the loves of the angels, and the Tower of Babel, are all on the level of the commonest mythologies. Yet they have clouded the mind of the most advanced members of the race.

In the higher passages of the Prophets such as that cited by my orthodox well-wisher, we have grand manifestoes of faith in the God of righteousness, though we hardly find aspirations after spiritual self-culture, or, saving perhaps in passages of the Psalms, anything like the tenderness of Christian ethics. There are glimpses, though only glimpses, of a universal religion. There is no glimpse anywhere of a life beyond the present, though there are allusions to a shadowy world of the dead. We have in the book of Job a deeply interesting effort to solve a mystery of the moral world, albeit with an abortive conclusion. We have the beauty of pastoral life and character in the book of Ruth; we have chivalrous affection in the friendship of David and Jonathan. In the Mosaic law, compared with the codes of the most civilized nations of antiquity, notable advances may be traced.

On the other hand, we have the picture of a

Deity covenanting to advance the interests of one tribe above those of the rest of mankind on the condition of the performance of a tribal rite, and thus stamping tribalism as perpetual. We have a Deity prospering the craft of Jacob, hardening the heart of Pharaoh so that he will not let Israel go, and then slaying all the guiltless firstborn of the Egyptians; sanctioning predatory invasion of Canaan and extermination of its people; making the sun to stand still in heaven that the slaughter may be complete; approving the treason of Rahab, the murder of Sisera, and the hewing of Agag in pieces; chronicling without condemnation David's putting to a death of torture the people of a captured city; prompting the butchery of all the prophets of Baal; sending forth a lying spirit to betray King Ahab to his ruin; causing forty children, for mocking a prophet, to be torn to pieces by bears. It can hardly be doubted that these presentations of Deity and the divine government have had their effect on the character of men, that they are partly responsible for the darker features of Puritanism and for the use of persecuting force in the supposed interest of religion.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." What

crimes and horrors followed in the train of the dark superstition which had its fancied warrant in those words!

The idea of a Chosen People still lingers and leads to aberrations. Perhaps the tribalism of which it is the Hebrew version may not have been without its effect in maintaining too sharp a distinction between Christendom and the rest of humanity.

It may be difficult to strike the balance. What is certain is that free inquiry has at length prevailed over tradition and empowered us to choose the good, of which there is rich store, such as the passage tendered for my conversion, in the Old Testament, and eschew the evil.

What is the relation of the Old Testament to the New? The Sanhedrim, for its part, gave that question a decisive answer. Devotees of Judaism have spoken of Christianity as its supplement. The relation is difficult to define, but to the pupil of Gamaliel the religion of Jesus was evidently a new dawn and a new life. We have Judaism still before us perpetuating its lingering tribalism by the tribal rite; refusing to blend with the races among which it dwells; to intermarry with them;

to break bread, if it can help, with them; treating that which is unclean for itself as clean for them; celebrating the feast of Purim in memory of its ancient feud. I speak, of course, of the strict and Talmudic Jew as he is found in Russia or Poland, not of those whom the *Sun* describes as having undergone American influence and become practically citizens of the American republic, or rather perhaps of the world, and not Talmudists, but simply theists.

DECEMBER, 1905.

XXXVI

JUSTICE HEREAFTER

Of Professor Osler's "Counsels and Ideals," which came into my hands the other day, the bulk is professional. But at the end are some pages on religion, death, and immortality. The illustrious professor rather affects the peculiar style which fascinates us in the writings of the doubting philosopher, Sir Thomas Browne. Yet his sentiments can hardly be mistaken. "As a rule, man dies as he had lived, uninfluenced practically by the thought of a future life." "The Preacher was right: in this matter man hath no preëminence over the beast. 'As one dieth, so dieth the other.'" In these sentences we have the keynote. At death, then, it matters nothing whether a man has been the benefactor or the scourge of his kind, the best of citizens or the worst of malefactors, the most self-denying of philanthropists or the grossest of voluptuaries; nor for the myriads who by no fault of their own have suffered and perhaps suffered patiently in this life is there any hope of compen-

sation hereafter. This is a doctrine which, like other doctrines, if it is proved must be accepted, but of which we should naturally wish to see the proof. The unhappy and the oppressed assuredly will. So will those who are losing the objects of their love.

If the opposite belief depended on stories of death-bed visions or on the emotions of the dying, the task of the sceptic would be easy. But to rest the case on the attitude at death is surely to look in a wrong quarter. It is in the living and healthy conscience that the intimation, not of immortality, which, strictly speaking, is inconceivable and therefore undemonstrable, but of a future existence, is to be sought. Conscience appears, in all in whom it has not been seared and silenced, to speak of a supreme justice, the awards of which are not limited to this world and which is not to be baffled, as in numberless cases earthly justice is, by the power or arts of the evildoer. That this idea is not constantly and distinctly present to the minds of men is no conclusive proof of its falsehood. If it is not constantly and distinctly present as the expectation of another life, it is present as the voice of morality in conflict with temptation.

Professor Osler's point of view, if I read him aright, seems to be that of a thoroughgoing evolutionist. Like other thoroughgoing evolutionists, he seems to assume that life is self-generated in the germ-plasm. But self-generation is inconceivable. There must have been something to indue that particle with generative force. Extreme evolutionists seem also to assume that continuity of development precludes essential change. "The individual," says Dr. Osler, "is nothing more than the transient offshoot of a germ-plasm, which has an unbroken continuity from generation to generation, from age to age." But if there is not essential change from the germ-plasm to Newton or to the highest example of spiritual aspiration, what change is essential? The unfolding may not be entirely from within. It may be due to influence from without. Once more, the evidence of our bodily senses may not be an exhaustive revelation of the universe. At all events, it seems difficult to maintain that continuity of development precludes essential change, or that an ascending series of states commencing in the germ-plasm might not culminate in spiritual life.

JANUARY, 1906.

XXXVII

OUR PRESENT POSITION

No candid reader, I hope, can have supposed that these letters were penned by an enemy to religion, though they may have frankly admitted the difficulties of belief. Their writer was moved by the gravity of the crisis, social as well as political, so great a part having been socially played by religion. He has been attempting to define the position, drawing the line between that which must be abandoned and that which is left, trying to guard against the proclivities of the hour and pleading for perfect freedom of inquiry, especially on behalf of the clergy, an order set apart and specially qualified for spiritual work.

There has been no more attack in these letters upon any particular religion than upon religion in general. Nothing of that kind could have been offered to the *Sun*.

Thus we stand. From highly educated and perfectly open minds the belief in the Bible as an

inspired volume on which the Christian world had been resting seems to have departed. We are left with the collected body of Hebrew literature, profoundly interesting, profoundly important, forming on the whole an upward step in the movement of humanity, but varying with the different authorships in elevation as well as in literary character, and marred in parts by tribalism and by the primitive morality of early times which, being taken for the divine morality, has wrought much evil.

Few now deny that Genesis is mythical. The dogmatic part of Christianity must apparently share its fate. If there was no Fall of Man, there could be no occasion for an Atonement, no room for an Incarnation. The sophistication of the myth in Genesis to which apologists resort is surely hopeless. The evidence of the Gospel miracles, and notably of the Resurrection, has given way under critical examination. But there still remain to us the character of Jesus and his teachings, with the record of the effect of those teachings, so far as they have been allowed fair play, on human character and progress. The barrier between Christendom and Heathendom is falling. The liberal theism of the Christian begins

to join hands with the liberal theism of the Hindu.

On the optimist theism of Leibnitz or the Bridgewater Treatises we can rest no more. Science has revealed much in the heavens as well as on earth, and forced us to see on earth many things, such as the ruthless waste of animal life, to which we had before shut our eyes. Evidently, if in the government of the universe perfect benevolence and justice are combined with omnipotence, the benevolence must be in the ultimate design. A hint of that kind our own consciousness may supply in our feeling that effort is essential to moral perfection. The movement, in the case of humanity at least, is on the whole upward and onward; while through the nobler part of our nature, with its pure affections, its poetry and tenderness, and even through the beauty of the earth and the glory of the starry skies, a spirit seems to commune and sympathize with ours. Metaphysical arguments will not hold. That a thing cannot be conceived by us may be a proof only of our mental limitations. But certainly nothing can to us be more inconceivable than the generation of mind and spirit from matter. "No man hath seen God at any

time." Such, apart from the intimations of conscience, appears to be the sum of our present knowledge respecting the Power which rules the universe. From the uniformity of natural law we infer the unity of its author. *Hypotheses non fingo* was the motto of Newton, which in this matter it will be specially well for us to observe.

The belief seems to be gaining ground that life beyond the grave is a fond illusion, at best a platonic speculation; that man at the last lies down and dies like the dog; that death consequently cancels all moral distinctions and levels the greatest benefactor with the worst enemy of his kind. The old arguments in favor of the doctrine of immortality, derived from the separate existence and indiscerptibility of the soul, such as were used by Bishop Butler, physiology, it must be owned, has swept away. There remains to us the testimony of conscience, telling us that as we do well or ill in this life it will be well or ill for us in the end. No more, in fact, was told us by the Founder of Christendom, whose words concerning a future state, notably the story of Dives and Lazarus, are homily and imagery, not revelation. But the voice of conscience has not yet been explained

away. From the fear of the Dantean hell, and the hideous idea of God as an eternal torturer, which it involves, the world has been set free.

It seems premature to assume that the visible beginning of life is its origin, or that the material character of the germ necessarily limits the development and bars a spiritual outcome as the end. Always we have to remember that our knowledge is bounded by our senses, and that we may be in a world quite other than that which sense reveals.

In the ministries of the different churches are a number of men, dedicated to a spiritual calling, whose character and learning, if they were free, might be very helpful. But they are in bondage to tests under which many of them writhe, resorting to shifts of interpretation whereby they do more harm than good. It is surely in the interest of all who desire the truth that clerical thought and speech should be set free.

Such in general outline appears to be our present position. There is no use in paltering with its facts or concealing its difficulties. Nor is there any way of salvation for us but unwavering and untrammelled pursuit of truth.

February, 1906.